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THE EGYPT OF THE FUTURE

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# THE EGYPT OF THE FUTURE

BY

EDWARD DICEY, C.B.

*Author of "Story of the Khedivate"*



LONDON

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## THE EGYPT OF THE FUTURE



## CHAPTER I

### MY RELATIONS WITH EGYPT

IN my *Story of the Khedivate* I endeavoured to narrate the history of Egypt from the day when Mohammed Ali landed in Egypt—as the envoy of the Sultan with a commission from the Porte to restore the authority of Turkey which had been almost reduced to a nullity by the Mamelukes—up to the present time when His Highness Abbas II. rules Egypt, nominally as the vassal of his Suzerain, but in reality as the figurehead of a British administration supported by British troops. My object in the sequel to the *Story of the Khedivate*, which I have ventured to call *The Egypt of the Future*, is to direct attention to certain defects in British administration under our Protectorate, and to the policy by which these defects could best be

rectified. Before, however, I can ask my readers to accept my views on the Egypt of the future as worthy of consideration, I deem it well to recall the general character of my relations with Egypt during close upon forty odd years. Let me tell this narrative as briefly and as impartially as is consistent with showing that, for the major portion of my life, I have played a humble part as an interested spectator, though never as an actor, during a very momentous period of history both for my own country and for Egypt.

The first occasion of my coming to the Valley of the Nile was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The glamour of that gorgeous pageant comes back to me as I write, but to dwell upon the lavish hospitality displayed by Ismail Pasha towards his invited guests would lead me too far from my subject to justify me in saying anything beyond the bare statement that the reorganisation of Egypt owes more to the first of the Khedives than to any other man, native or foreigner, living or dead. After Ismail had fallen from his high estate it was the fashion of his critics to denounce him as a fraudulent bankrupt, who had squandered the money of his country in order to gratify his personal vanity

and to fill his own pockets. At the time, however, when the Canal was inaugurated, he was popularly regarded, not only as the wealthiest, but as the most enlightened of Oriental rulers. Both estimates were untrue, but the latter estimate came nearer the truth than the former. In justice to a Prince, who with many great and grave errors combined lofty ambitions and singular ability, it should be borne in mind that of the ninety odd millions with which he burdened the finances of Egypt, by far the larger portion was spent on the Suez Canal, which could not have been constructed without his lavish aid; on the Alexandrian breakwater; on the Soudan railway; on the immense sugar factories; on the annexation of the Soudan, by which the dominion of Egypt was extended under the governorship of Sir Samuel Baker to the Equatorial Lakes; and on a variety of industrial enterprises which, though they administered to his personal ambition, contributed also to the development of Egypt.

I need hardly say that I, in common with every intelligent man in Egypt, whether foreign or native, am absolutely convinced that, under his administration of Egypt, Lord Cromer has

been actuated by no sordid or self-seeking considerations. But this conviction is quite consistent with a belief on my part, that though, so long as Egypt is under our military occupation, supreme authority must rest with the representative of our virtual Protectorate, it does not logically follow that our interference with the authority of the Government should be based on the system which his Lordship has pursued—that of administering Egyptian affairs by British officials. I have always maintained that the right policy for England as well as Egypt was that propounded by Lord Dufferin in his masterly report, and advocated by Nubar Pasha up to the end of his life, namely, that we should administer Egypt as we administer the native States of India, not directly by British officials, but indirectly by native officials under the personal supervision of a British resident. In the following chapters of this book I shall deal with the present position of Egypt as illustrating the merits and demerits of the two systems of administration, the one proposed by Lord Dufferin, the other carried into execution by Lord Cromer. All I need point out here is that the latter system, however admirably it has worked in



developing the material resources of Egypt, has completely failed in gaining the sympathy or winning the respect of the native population. There is, therefore, no inconsistency on my part, as being one of the oldest advocates of a British Protectorate over Egypt, that I should at the same time argue that our Protectorate would be strengthened, if in the internal administration of the country we gave more scope to native influences and ideas and ruled Egypt in accordance with Oriental convictions, traditions and usages, by native administrators. There are, as I shall explain later on, many difficulties in the way of introducing British ideas of justice, morality and government. But if I succeed in showing that the Anglification of Egypt by British officials is an absolute impossibility, I see myself no incompatibility in my advocating as our paramount duty the maintenance of our supreme authority as essential to the safety of our highway to India, and in my also contending that our supreme authority would be strengthened instead of weakened if we relinquished a futile attempt to implant British ideas in an Oriental population through the agency of British officials.

The strongest impression left on my mind

by my visit to Egypt in 1869 was the vital importance to England of the Suez Canal. At this period French influence was absolutely supreme in Egypt. The Empress Eugénie was the figurehead of the gorgeous pageant to which I have already alluded. She was so, not so much as the consort of Napoleon III., then regarded as the most powerful sovereign in Europe, nor on account of her romantic history, her great beauty and her singular charm of manner, but as the chosen representative of the Second Empire. Everywhere Her Majesty had the place of honour. She was the one centre of attraction. The *Entente Cordiale* was not even dreamt of in those days, when the offices, the railroads, the steam-boat services in Egypt were all filled with Frenchmen ; French was the language of the cosmopolitan society of Cairo. The Khedive, the Princes, the Ministers and the courtiers of the vice-regal palaces, all, as a rule, spoke French. I think at this time, the Court, taking their tone from Ismail Pasha, were growing a little uneasy at the air of proprietorship assumed by the French officials and politicians after the formal opening of the Canal across the Isthmus. According,

therefore, to all the tenets of Oriental diplomacy the Khedive and his Ministers endeavoured to enlist the sympathies of the nation most likely to oppose the establishment of a French Protectorate over Egypt. That nation was clearly England. In consequence, all the English visitors to Cairo at this period received an exceptionally warm welcome at the hands of the Khedive and his Ministers. M. de Lesseps, it is also fair to add, showed special civility to the English visitors who had come to witness the triumph of his great enterprise. Of all my early recollections of Egypt, the pleasantest were perhaps those of the days I spent at his chalet in Ismailia and of the visits we paid to the different points of interest in the Canal. At the opening I made the journey through the Canal on the *Hawk*, a vessel belonging to the Telegraph Construction Company, and had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of a large number of financiers, engineers, shipowners and merchants, who looked upon the Canal from a business point of view. As to the Canal having been proved capable of construction there was no longer any possibility of doubt. We had sailed ourselves from the Mediterranean to the

Red Sea, and as to the feasibility of the transit all we could say was *Solvitur ambulando*. But even after we had made the passage, grave doubts were entertained, and I think honestly entertained, by the majority of our fellow passengers as to the Suez Canal being kept open permanently, or as to its proving a financial success, or even of the new route being largely utilised by British shipping. The chief opponent of these depreciatory views was the late Sir John Hankshaw, who had always contended—in opposition to almost all the leading engineers in England—that not only the Suez Canal could and would be made, but that when it was made it had come to stay. It was from a speech delivered by Sir John when the *Hawk* was stationed in the Bitter Lakes that my attention was first called to the fact that the Canal was destined to be our highway to our Indian Empire.

At this period, however, there seemed to be no immediate prospect of British interests being gravely affected by the predominance of France in Egypt. His Highness Ismail Pasha was then regarded at home and abroad as the founder of a new Egypt, as a Prince possessing untold

wealth and practically unlimited resources, immense energy, high ambitions, firmly seated on his throne and resolved to uphold the independence of his kingdom against all comers. If this forecast was correct, there was no immediate danger of France assuming a position in Egypt which would enable her to shut out England from the free use of the Suez Canal. On this hypothesis, the question whether our highway to India would be endangered by the creation of a new maritime route between the West and the East was regarded rather as an academic controversy than as a matter of practical politics. In the course of a few months the question of the Suez Canal was driven out of notice by the outbreak of the War between France and Germany, the fall of the Second Empire, the disastrous defeat of the French armies throughout the campaign, which ended in the entry of the German troops into Paris, and the outbreak of the Commune. It was in September 1869 that I had seen the Empress Eugénie for the last time in Egypt at the ball given in her honour at the Ismailia Palace erected for this special purpose on the banks of the Bitter Lakes, when her arrival was saluted by all the ships of war



moored opposite Ismailia. It was in September 1870 that I next saw Her Majesty arriving in a one-horse fly at the Charing Cross Station in London on her way to Chislehurst, and struggling in vain to force her way to the platform through a dense crowd of holiday folk, amongst whom she passed unknown and unnoticed. With this dramatic incident my personal connection with Egyptian affairs terminated for the time, and only revived in 1876.

During this interval the whole position of Egypt had been altered. The fall of the Second Empire and the consequent defeat of France had proved fatal to the influence on which Ismail had based his financial projects. With some reason he had relied upon the support of Napoleon III., and even more perhaps on that of the Empress Eugénie, in assisting him to carry out his grandiose conceptions for the aggrandisement of himself and his country. Had the Napoleonic dynasty remained in power, it is, to say the least, probable that he might have raised money on reasonable terms till such time as his vast projects became remunerative. But from a France crippled by the indemnity of the forty milliards, and governed by a

Republic hostile to Imperial traditions, no such help could be expected. I suspect myself that even at the inauguration of the Suez Canal Ismail's financial position had become well-nigh desperate. However this may be, His Highness resorted to borrowing enormous sums, first at extravagant, and later on at usurious rates, and by this means he tided off the evil day for some years to come. By 1875, however, his grave embarrassments had become matter of public notoriety. In this year Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, purchased in the name of the British Government the £4,000,000 of the Suez Canal Deferred Shares held by the Khedive, and in 1876, at his instance, the late Mr. Stephen Cave, a highly respected Bristol banker, was sent out to Cairo on a mission whose avowed object was to conduct an examination into the finances of Egypt. He took with him a large staff and was welcomed by Ismail Pasha as if he was the bearer of some important proposal. The general belief entertained at the Khedivial Court was that, if Mr. Cave's report should prove favourable as to the intrinsic solvency of Egypt, the British Government was prepared to guarantee the public debt of Egypt

in consideration of the Khedive consenting to a virtual, if not a nominal, British Protectorate over Egypt.

At that time I was in close relations with certain financiers who were large holders of Egyptian securities, and at their request I went out to Cairo to learn as much as I could of the true state of affairs. My stay there was suddenly cut short by the abrupt recall of the Cave mission on the official ground that Mr. Cave found any searching investigation of Egyptian finances to be a task which would require a far longer absence from his own business than he could possibly afford. I have strong reason to believe that the real cause of the recall was that the late Lord Derby, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, offered so violent an antagonism to the idea of any British Protectorate over Egypt that the Premier recognised the impossibility of carrying out his Protectorate policy without breaking up his Ministry, and thereupon informed Mr. Cave, to the great disappointment of Ismail Pasha, that a further prolongation of Mr. Cave's mission of enquiry could be of no practical advantage. During my second stay in Cairo I learnt a good deal as to the



permanent financial condition of the country, and, what was to me far more important, I formed a friendship with Nubar Pasha which remained uninterrupted till his death. He was the one great statesman, Egyptian or European, I have ever known in Cairo, and it is to him more than any other person I am indebted for such knowledge as I possess of the land which has been to me of late years almost a second country.

By Mr. Cave's advice upon his return, my old friend Sir (then Mr.) Rivers Wilson, was sent out to complete the interrupted investigation into the finances of Egypt. In 1877 I was in constant relations with Nubar Pasha, who then, when not actually an exile, was out of favour with the Vice-regal Court and was living in Paris, whence he made frequent visits to London. In that year I published several articles in the *Nineteenth Century* which were suggested to me by Nubar, and which attracted considerable attention. The subject matter of those articles dealt mainly with issues which belong to the past rather than the present. The only one to which I would call attention nowadays is one entitled "Our Route to India," as it explains the ideas which for thirty years I have advocated as

justifying a British Protectorate over Egypt by England. In this article, published in 1877, I stated that

“Whether we like it or not we are bound to face the contingency that at no distant period Russia may command the head of the Euphrates valley by land and the Bosphorus by sea. The mere possibility that Russia may obtain the command of the Bosphorus renders it a matter of urgent necessity to us to secure the command of the Isthmus route to India. In order to effect this we must have the power of keeping the Suez Canal open to our ships at all times and under all circumstances; and to secure this we must acquire a recognised footing in the Delta of Egypt of a far more decided character than any we can claim at present . . .

“In order therefore to secure our freedom of uninterrupted access to India across the Isthmus it is essential that we should not only have an unrestricted right of employing its waters for war purposes, but that the course from sea to sea as well as its ports of ingress and egress should be under our protection. No strategical knowledge is required to appreciate the importance of the control of the Canal to England. . . The command of the Suez Canal involves of necessity the virtual occupation of Lower Egypt. . .

“It would be mere hypocrisy to contend that the primary motive with which I, and those who think with me, advocate the occupation of

Egypt, is a desire to benefit the condition of its people ; if that were our motive it would be our duty to recommend the annexation of Upper as well as of Lower Egypt. The reason why I advocate the measure is because I regard it as one demanded by our Imperial interests under the changes now impending in the East. Still it is not unimportant to show that in thus protecting our route to India we should at the same time, as I believe, confer a great boon upon the people of Egypt."

On Mr. Wilson's arrival in Egypt, Ismail Pasha issued a decree appointing a Commission of Enquiry of which Mr. Rivers Wilson and Major Baring (now Lord Cromer), then a member of the Caisse de la Dette, were appointed as the representatives of the British Government. The Commission of Enquiry, after long and tedious negotiations, succeeded in inducing Ismail to surrender his private estates to the services of the floating debt, and thereby saved the credit of Egypt. It had been arranged beforehand that the Commission of Enquiry should be succeeded by a Commission of Liquidation. This arrangement was, however, knocked on the head by a sudden announcement on the part of the Khedive that he had resolved upon

establishing constitutional government in Egypt by appointing an International Ministry of which Nubar Pasha was to be the President, with Mr. Rivers Wilson as Minister of Finance and M. de Blignières as Minister of Public Works. As an intimate friend of Mr. Rivers Wilson and of Nubar Pasha, and as a writer on Egyptian affairs of some small weight in England, I was invited to come out to Egypt with the view of ultimately entering the Egyptian public service. For various reasons, public as well as private, I came to the conclusion that I could be of more service to the interests I had at heart if I remained independent, and, in consideration of the services I had rendered, Rivers Wilson and Nubar Pasha facilitated my obtaining a concession together with the Ottoman Bank for the establishment of an Egyptian Credit Foncier. I was obliged, for private reasons, to leave Cairo suddenly just after the Concession in question had been granted and after Ismail Pasha had given his European Ministers to understand that he did not approve of the limitations which they thought it their duty to impose upon his autocratic power. I was not, therefore, greatly surprised to learn shortly after

my return to England that His Highness had dismissed the so-called Anglo-French Ministry and was determined to forbid the prosecution of the Commission of Liquidation, which they had proposed to institute without further delay.

It would be foreign to my present purpose to discuss how far Ismail Pasha could have held his throne, or whether England and France were well advised in appealing to the authority of the Sultan in order to secure the deposition of Ismail and the nomination of Tewfik as the successor to his father's throne. Suffice it to say that I returned to Egypt in the following year in connection with the Credit Foncier, of which company, in conjunction with M. Raphael Suares, who had taken the place left vacant by the retirement of the Ottoman Bank, I was one of the original promoters and directors and remained on the Board for ten years. In this way I formed a close intimacy with the leading financial authorities in Egypt, an intimacy which I have retained up to the present day.

My next visit to Egypt was made at the end of 1880, when Tewfik Pasha had succeeded to the Khedivate. I was present at the commencement of the Arabi insurrection, when the



Egyptian troops mutinied in the square of the Palace of Abdin, and when the mutiny was quelled—for the time—by the Khedive accepting the demands of the insurgent leader. The late Sir William Gregory, a very old friend of my own, who, with Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, had espoused the cause of the mutiny, and who, I believe, composed the letters to the British Press which Arabi was supposed to have written himself over the signature of "Achmed the Egyptian," introduced me to Arabi and his colleagues. This introduction gave me considerable light as to the intrinsic weakness of any Egyptian agitation based on Nationalist principles. A stronger man than the then reigning Khedive might probably have suppressed the rising at its outbreak, but it is only fair to remember that Tewfik had been placed on the throne as the nominee of the Porte, and that he was thus placed in a position under which he bore all the responsibility of personal rule without the power to make his authority respected. Egypt was then under the Dual Control, the most illogical of the many illogical systems under which the country has ever been administered. The two controllers were Sir

Auckland Colvin and M. de Blignières, both of them intelligent and fair-minded gentlemen, but both alike paralysed by the divergence of views existing between their respective Governments. As soon as England had advised the suppression of the mutiny by force of arms, France espoused the cause of the mutiny as calculated to disparage the credit of her fellow-partner in the Dual Control. The French Government, animated in those days by its traditional hostility towards Great Britain, and led astray by exaggerated reports as to the authority exercised by Arabi over the native population of Egypt, finally went the length of withdrawing its fleet when England announced her intention of bombarding Alexandria and suppressing the insurrection by British troops. The action of France, however, unintentionally, freed the hands of England; and after the campaign, which ended in Tel-el-Kebir and in the restoration of Tewfik to the Khedivial throne by British troops, the supremacy of England in Egypt was established by the logic of facts. The Dual Control was abolished and the military occupation of Egypt by British troops was deemed, and rightly deemed, to be an

absolute necessity till such time as the authority of the Khedivial Government had been definitely restored. Throughout this critical period I was not personally present in Egypt, but I was in constant communication with political, financial, and social notabilities in Egypt, who kept me closely informed of their views and ideas, and I may perhaps claim that my personal absence enabled me to form a clearer and more impartial view of the situation than I could have formed if I had been on the spot.

I returned to Egypt in 1882, after Arabi had been sentenced to death and had had his sentence commuted to exile in deference to a sentimental outcry in his favour on the part of the British public. I had the opportunity of discussing the then position of affairs with Nubar, Cherif, Riaz, Fakri Pashas, and with Tigrane Bey, all of whom were very desirous of ascertaining how far England's promise of speedily terminating her military occupation was made in good faith or was only intended to throw dust in the eyes, not so much of Egypt, as of France and the other leading Continental Powers. My answer always was that the



promise had been made with absolute honesty ; and that there was no statesman in England and no influential party who genuinely desired to convert our military occupation into a permanent Protectorate. At the same time I expressed my own conviction that when once England had pledged her word to continue her occupation till such time as Egypt had, under British administration, been rendered capable of protecting herself against internal or external dangers, she had committed herself to a course of action incapable of fulfilment. In the course of my conversations on the above subject I remember quoting the opinion expressed to me on my way through Paris on my outward journey by the late Baron de Soubeyran when, to a question of his, as to the intentions of the British Government, I replied that they considered our military occupation as simply *provisoire*. His answer was “ *J'admets bien que c'est provisoire, mais c'est un provisoire qui durera éternellement.* ” I replied this was exactly my own opinion, but that it was not that of my fellow-countrymen. Thirty years have passed since these conversations took place, but if I was asked my own opinion to-day, I

should still adhere to Baron de Soubeyran's dictum.

I spent the winters in Cairo every year up to 1885. During this year I was in constant relations with my old friend Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, who had been sent out there by the late Lord Salisbury's first Ministry at the instigation of Lord Randolph Churchill, in order to negotiate with Mukhtar Pasha a convention for the withdrawal of the British Army of occupation and its replacement—in case of any disturbance—by Turkish troops. The statement that the Wolff mission was decided upon owing to a genuine, however impracticable, desire on the part of the then Government to free themselves from their military obligations towards Egypt, is established beyond the possibility of doubt by the fact that the convention was sanctioned by the British Government, and would have become operative but for the Sultan's refusal, on the advice of France, to ratify the convention. I learnt of the collapse of the convention to my great personal satisfaction, and I have seen no reason to change my mind as to the action of France having unintentionally proved a benefit, not only to England, but to

Egypt. Shortly before the resignation of the Salisbury Ministry I was appointed a Civil Companion of the Bath "in recognition of services rendered in Egypt." I may add that Lord Randolph saw cause later on during the remainder of his too brief life—when I was on terms of exceptional intimacy with him—to alter materially his views about Egypt.

Owing to private circumstances there was, after 1886, a break in my visits to Egypt, and when I returned there again in 1900, Tewfik Pasha—whom I had learnt to know and respect for the good sense and loyalty he displayed in the very difficult position of a nominally independent Sovereign under virtual British control—had died, and His Highness Abbas II. reigned in his stead.

In the course of this book I may have to say something more as to the personal characters of the three Khedives whom I have known personally. To form any trustworthy forecast of the future of Egypt, it is necessary to understand the latest chapter of Egyptian history, during which England has become a dominant factor in the fortunes of the Khedivial kingdom. Since 1900 I have been a well-nigh regular

visitor to Egypt and have made many fresh acquaintances and new friends in the land of the Pharaohs. It is with somewhat of a pang that, looking back on the past, I cannot recall a single one of the friends I made or of the people I had known during my first sojourn in Egypt who is still amongst the living, or if still alive has not left Egypt for good.

I trust, however, I have said enough in these initial pages to show that I am qualified to form opinions as to the future of Egypt from my knowledge of the last seven-and-thirty years, and that whether these opinions of mine be right or wrong, they deserve attention as those of a writer who has seriously studied the conditions of Egypt, and from his life-long study has arrived at certain definite conclusions.

## CHAPTER II

### OUR PRESENT POSITION IN EGYPT

It is close upon five-and-thirty years ago, on the occasion of my first visit to Cairo, that one night driving homewards through the native quarters, which in those days reached almost up to Shepherd's Hotel, I stopped in front of an open-air Café, where a dense crowd of natives sat listening eagerly to a Dervish singing or, perhaps I should say, intoning, a sort of metrical romance. I asked my dragoman what the Dervish was reciting, and was told in reply that he was discoursing of the old days, when Egypt was the greatest nation amidst the peoples of the world. I remember writing at the time rather in jest than in earnest that perhaps before long Europe might be confronted with an Egyptian question. It seems as if this random forecast is likely to be fulfilled at an earlier date than I had

ever anticipated. For it is, to say the least, upon the cards that the obvious ambition of Turkey to reassert her Suzerainty over the Khedivial Kingdom may lead to an European enquiry into the position of England in Egypt.

I shall probably be told that both Europe and Egypt are so satisfied with the results of our Protectorate that there is no cause to apprehend any external or internal interference with its maintenance; and that the British authorities in Egypt entertain no such apprehensions. I shall doubtless be also informed that it is inconsistent on my part as a lifelong advocate of the annexation of Egypt by England even to suggest that our hold on Egypt is not so secure as it is commonly supposed to be by persons who form their judgment on the optimist reports issued year after year by Lord Cromer and our Anglo-Egyptian officials. It is, I admit, asking too much to suppose that the readers of these pages will bear in mind a series of articles, necessarily of an ephemeral character, which I have written since the opening of the Suez Canal up to the present day. But I assert without hesitation that any impartial perusal of the various articles



contributed by me to newspapers and periodicals will show that throughout I have always based my demand for the occupation of Egypt by England on the plain straightforward ground that England cannot afford to let her highway to India pass under the control of any Power—or combination of Powers—other than herself.

I have frequently contended that an English Protectorate would secure Egypt orderly government and material prosperity greater than she could hope to enjoy under native rule, or under the dominion of any continental Power. As an Englishman writing for Englishmen, I regard the interests of England to be the one main object any British statesman, politician, or publicist should have in view. Champions of international altruism may dispute the justice of this contention. But so long as I entertain this opinion, whether right or wrong, there is no inconsistency in my arguing that the policy pursued by our British officials in the administration of Egypt, or by British statesmanship at home and abroad, is not the policy best calculated to effect the object I have in view—the consolidation of the tenure in virtue of which, and of which alone, we keep in our

own hands the command of the highway to our Indian Empire. If that tenure is being weakened by recent events, and is likely to be still further weakened, however unintentionally, by certain measures which our British authorities in Egypt are said to have in contemplation, then surely I am justified in warning my fellow-countrymen that our position in Egypt is not quite so strong or quite so unassailable as they are disposed to imagine.

To understand the true story of England's present position in South Africa one has to recall our action, or rather inaction, after our defeat at Majuba. In like fashion it is impossible to understand our present position in Egypt without recalling the policy, or rather the lack of policy, adopted by England after our victory at Tel-el-Kebir. It is characteristic of our British habit that we engaged in an armed invasion of Egypt in 1882 without any policy as to what was to be done in the event of success, and without coming to any arrangement for joint action with France, a Power having great interests in Egypt. As matters turned out, the stars in their courses fought on our side, and, by a series of unforeseen contingencies, England had it in her power to



have there and then assumed a Protectorate over Egypt.

The opportunity thus offered was deliberately thrown away. Despatches were sent from the Foreign Office under Mr. Gladstone's Premiership to every Power interested, however remotely, in Egyptian affairs, to the effect that our military occupation was merely temporary, that our troops would be withdrawn as soon as order was restored, and that we pledged ourselves beforehand to abstain from any annexation of Egyptian territory or from securing any advantage for ourselves not to be shared with other European Powers.

After the entry of British troops into Cairo, we again informed the world that we intended to reorganise Egypt, and professed our desire to see Egypt converted into an independent self-governing State in order that we might terminate our occupation at an early period. Thus we tied our own hands and committed ourselves to accomplish a transformation which common-sense should have shown to be impossible, unless we retained possession of the true "free hand" with which our own strong arm had provided us. In so doing we lost the first of the three

opportunities afforded us by the chapter of accidents for establishing a British Protectorate over Egypt.

The second opening afforded us was due to the insurrection of the Dervishes under the Mahdi. We compelled the Khedivial Government to evacuate the Soudan. In the end, the invasion of Egypt by the Dervishes was repulsed by British troops led by British officers. This plain, hard truth was kept as much out of sight as possible at home, but it was fully recognised abroad. After we had thus once again saved Egypt from anarchy, Europe would have raised no protest had we followed up our successful campaign by its logical result—the declaration of an avowed Protectorate over the Valley of the Nile. No advantage, however, was taken of the opportunity thus offered. No change was made in our relations with Egypt or with Europe : for the second time, having the winning cards in her hand, England declined to play them and to score the game.

A third chance was still to be allowed us. The Government of the Dervishes, though not killed, had received a mortal blow. By the withdrawal of the Egyptian administration the

Soudan, under the rule of the Khalifa, had entered into the category of a "No Man's Land" in Africa, liable—in virtue of the treaty of Berlin, to which England was a party—to be occupied by the first European Power disposed to claim it as coming within her sphere of influence. By some means or other, which have never been clearly ascertained, secret information reached the British Government that France was preparing to send a force from the French Soudan to the banks of the White Nile, and was conducting negotiations at Adis Adeba in order to induce the Emperor Menelek to send an Abyssinian army to meet the French mission under Captain Marchand at Fashoda and to take possession of the Western Soudan. Happily for England the then British Government displayed, under Lord Salisbury's premiership, a promptitude of action rare in our political annals. Orders were sent out to Cairo instructing our military commanders to proceed on a campaign, whose avowed object was the overthrow of Dervish rule in the Soudan. The story of the capture of Khartoum and the flight of the Khalifa is too well known to require repeating.

If the Emperor Menelek had kept his agreement with France and had sent an Abyssinian army to join the French military mission on the banks of the White Nile, it might have been difficult for England to assert that the raising of the tricolour at Fashoda, supported by a powerful army, did not come within the meaning of an "effective occupation" laid down by the treaty of Berlin. Owing to the Emperor Menelek's failure to fulfil his share of the Franco-Abyssinian convention, and to the firmness of Lord Kitchener, England was saved from a catastrophe which might have fatally impaired her position in Egypt. The Soudan was formally declared to be placed under the "condominium"—whatever that may mean—of His Majesty the King of England and of His Highness the Khedive. This *coup d'état*, for it was nothing less, was accepted with approval in Egypt and in Europe. And it was taken for granted in all continental countries that the declaration would be followed up by the announcement that England was henceforth to take Egypt under her avowed protection. The delusion, however, was soon dispelled. For the third time England was given an opportunity to regularise her position

in Egypt, and once more she shrunk from the responsibility of openly admitting that she is the real ruler of Egypt, and thereby obtaining the freedom of action absolutely essential to the success of her present administrative policy.

Thus, on three several occasions, we could have declared our Protectorate under circumstances which would have justified its declaration in the eyes of Europe as well as of Egypt. Up to the present day, however, we have kept up the pretence that our military occupation is of a temporary character, and will be terminated, in accordance with the assurances we had given of our own accord, as soon as Egypt has been reorganized under British administration so as to hold her own as an independent State.

I am most anxious not to discuss the Egyptian question from a party point of view. I adhere now as always to my original contention, that to retain our hold on Egypt, the highway to our Indian possessions, is a matter of vital importance to the British Empire, and I should deeply regret to write a word which might impair the British tenure of supreme authority in the Valley of the Nile. But in my judgment it is the interest of England to look at things



as they are, not as one might wish them to be, and to admit that during the quarter of a century which has elapsed since our troops first landed in Egypt, we have done nothing whatever to consolidate a defective title or to modify the rights which foreigners acquired in Egypt at dates long preceding our occupation. We have not only done nothing to render Egypt more fit for independence than she was previously to our military occupation, but on the contrary, we have done much to weaken such small capacity for self-government as she possessed at the time when our troops entered Cairo and took possession of the citadel. The two first of these three contentions are matters of fact. The third and last is, I admit, a matter of opinion.

In as far as I am aware, the negotiations which led up to the Anglo-French Agreement have never been made known, and for obvious and adequate reasons are not likely to become public property for many years to come. But I think all external evidence points to the conclusion that these negotiations originated in Paris and not in London. After the Soudan had been conquered by British troops, and after the terri-



tories ruled over by the Mahdi and the Khalifa had been formally taken possession of by the British Government as forming—subject to a nominal partnership with Egypt—part and parcel of the British Empire, the Government of the French Republic, of which M. Delcassé was the leading member, realised that France could never hope to recover her lost position in Egypt except by force of arms. The only interests France retained in Egypt were mainly of a sentimental character, and sentiment exercises far smaller influence in French politics than it does in those of England. At the period to which I allude, the alliance of Russia, the nation *amie et alliée*, had been shown to be utterly worthless from a military point of view; and under these circumstances any repetition of the Marchand mission or any action on the part of France calculated to exasperate popular feeling in England would have been an act of sheer insanity.

The maintenance of peace was essential to the existence of the Republic; but the credit of having averted the danger of war by giving way upon matters in dispute is after all only a negative recommendation with a nation intensely

vain—and not without reason—of its military repute. Time after time, rising dissatisfaction with the pacific policy of the Third Republic had been lulled by some display of military strength, such as the conquest of Cochin-China, the annexation of Tunis and Madagascar, the war with Siam, and the extension of the Algerian hinterland to the south of Timbuctoo, enterprises which were well within the power of France to accomplish by herself, which were not likely to meet with active opposition from any of the great European Powers, and which gratified the vanity of the French nation. To speak plainly, France has been distracted since 1870 by an intense desire to prove to the world, and still more to herself, that she is still the France of the First Empire, and by an even more intense dread of establishing the truth of this assertion by the arbitrament of war.

Unfortunately, the gratification created by military achievements of a colonial character is even more short-lived across the Channel than it is with us, and some new achievement was needed to satisfy popular impatience in France. No great intelligence was required to fix upon Morocco as the quarter in which her military

strength could best be displayed without incurring any serious danger of an armed intervention leading to an European war. Spain, the Power best qualified by proximity and history to intervene in Morocco, was too weak and too distracted by dynastic and political dissensions to offer any formidable resistance to the establishment of a French protectorate over the Moorish State. England, it was thought, was the only European Power which could possibly interfere in order to thwart the conversion of Morocco into a French colony, administered in the same way and on the same principles as Tunis. Moreover, in view of the collapse of Russia, it was manifestly in the interest of France to establish more friendly relations between herself and England, which had been interrupted since the commencement of our military occupation of Egypt. The idea of a secret treaty, which was to be kept a profound secret till the Convention had been actually concluded, and which would take all other Powers interested in Morocco by surprise, is more in accordance with French diplomacy than with British; while the omission to communicate the Anglo-French Convention officially to Germany seems more likely to have originated

in the brain of a French than of an English statesman.

Be this as it may, the agreement was one with which both the British Government and the British nation had much reason to be satisfied. Ever since our occupation of Egypt, France had taken the lead in supporting every element, every influence, and every interest in Egypt, whether native or foreign, which, from one cause or the other, was hostile to the policy of England. The Marchand mission was only the crowning act of a long series of endeavours to undermine the authority exercised nominally by the Khedive and his native ministers, but in reality by the representatives of Great Britain and our British officials, who were supposed to act as advisers to their native colleagues, but whose advice was tantamount to a command. Our interest in Egypt was so vastly in excess of our interest in Morocco that, as a matter of bargaining, we acted most prudently and wisely in sacrificing the latter in order to secure the former. Apart, too, from its bearing upon Egypt, it was no small gain to England to establish friendly relations between herself and her nearest neighbour, and thereby to induce the French Republic

to abandon the policy of pin-pricking, which she had pursued persistently not only in Egypt, but in Newfoundland, in the New Hebrides, in West Africa, in Siam, and in every part of the globe where British and French possessions or spheres of influence were contiguous to one another.

The immediate gain to France under the Anglo-French Agreement was not equally great. It was within the power of France to give England a "free hand" in Egypt in as far as she was concerned. It was not within the power of England to guarantee France a "free hand" in Morocco. All we could possibly do was to pledge ourselves to support France by British diplomacy in any designs she might entertain of establishing a Protectorate over Morocco. In as far as I can form any opinion, there were two considerations which induced France to believe that by "swapping"—I know of no fitter term—Egypt for Morocco, she was likely to obtain full value for what she surrendered. The first consideration was that if she secured the adhesion of England to a French Protectorate over the Sheereefian kingdom by a convention—kept a profound secret till the compact was signed and



sealed—Europe would find itself face to face with an accomplished fact which no Continental Power had any sufficient motive for trying to set aside. The second consideration was a latent hope that England, when once committed to diplomatic support, might become so identified with French interests as to exchange moral influence for an offensive and defensive alliance.

Both these considerations have proved to be erroneous. It may seem strange that France should ever have imagined that any secret agreement between herself and Great Britain for adding Morocco, in fact if not in name, to the enormous territories she already holds on the North African coast would be accepted without protest by the other European Powers. It seems even more strange that France should have believed that under any conceivable circumstances England would go to war in order to include Morocco within the French sphere of influence in Africa. The only explanation I can offer for the latter delusion is that, the wish being father to the thought, France enormously exaggerated the importance of the anti-German sentiments expressed by a large and influential section of the British Press, and seriously



believed that public opinion in England, out of jealousy of the naval and industrial competition of the Fatherland, would welcome any opportunity of suppressing this competition before it had obtained formidable proportions. I am bound to add that this delusion was to some extent justified by the exuberant enthusiasm with which the restoration of an *entente cordiale* between England and France was greeted by the British public.

I must admit, too, that the unusual demonstrations of friendship for France, officially as well as privately, could hardly fail to create an impression abroad that, in the event of the controversy about Morocco reaching an acute stage, England might not be indisposed to give her armed support to her partner in the Anglo-French Agreement. At home such a delusion was confuted by the simple fact that the negotiations which ended in this agreement had been conducted with the personal knowledge and approval of His Majesty the King. His people are too well acquainted with his great common-sense, his intimate acquaintance with foreign politics, his singular tact and knowledge of human nature, and his ardent patriotism, not

to feel that the interests of England, of which the chief is the maintenance of peace in Europe, were safe in the hands of our reigning sovereign. But abroad the delusion did not and could not appear so manifestly untenable as it did to us.

To my thinking, Germany was right in her contention that no two Powers can arrange between themselves of their own free will and pleasure as to the partition of a third State, in which other European Powers have political or commercial interests of their own. I am no great believer in International law, but if there is such a thing in Europe, Germany, or for that matter any great European Power, was fully justified in declining to accept the provisions of the Anglo-French Agreement with respect to Morocco until these provisions had been discussed and approved by an International Conference. The question whether France or Germany scored more or less diplomatic points in the Algeciras controversy seems to me singularly futile. The one result of the Conference which interests England is the principle, formally enunciated by Germany and accepted by France, that the latter Power is not to obtain the free hand in Morocco she would have been

entitled to if the Anglo-French Agreement had been recognised as valid. As things stand, France is only allowed to exercise her authority over Morocco under the name of Muley el Hamed, and subject to European supervision.

So far, England has no cause to complain on her own account. Germany has pursued throughout the same line she adopted when the Anglo-French Agreement was—in contradiction to the course pursued by France—communicated to Berlin by England immediately after its formal signature. The answer of the Imperial Chancellor to this communication was in substance that Germany saw no cause to object to the Anglo-French Agreement as far as Egypt was concerned, since under the British occupation England had steadily maintained the principle of the open door, and left intact all rights and interests possessed by German subjects previously to the occupation. And further, upon the understanding that these conditions would remain unchanged, Germany undertook not to oppose British policy in Egypt. The free hand therefore accorded is strengthened by the fact that France has pledged herself to assist England diplomatically in the event of

any third Power disputing our right to establish an avowed Protectorate or to seriously modify our present anomalous position in Egypt.

In these circumstances I think most people will agree with me that the present moment is by no means propitious for any attempt to extend and regularise our unsatisfactory position in Egypt. According to the old saying "he who will not when he may, when he wills he shall have nay." We have thrice had our chance and have thrice thrown it away. I am afraid, therefore, that we must wait in patience till, by the extraordinary good luck which has often saved us in Egypt as elsewhere from the errors of our statesmanship, we are offered another chance. This opinion is not shared by the British authorities in Egypt, whose judgment most justly carries great weight with the British public. They state with perfect justice that Egypt under British administration has attained a degree of material prosperity never before known in her annals. The extraordinary rise in the price of arable land and of building lots in Cairo and all the leading provincial cities may be due to reckless speculation, but nobody can dispute the statement that the fellaheen

earn higher wages, are better fed, better clothed, and better housed than they ever were before ; that the Pashas and the large landowners have, as a body, amassed fortunes beyond the dreams of avarice ; that a very great increase has taken place in the amount of land brought under irrigation ; that railroads and canals and public works of general utility have been introduced under the existing *régime* ; and that, in spite of all this, the State Revenues show an enormous surplus over expenditure.

It is hardly a matter for astonishment, if our British authorities in Egypt are convinced that the new order of things established under our rule must command the respect of foreign countries and the confidence of the native population to such an extent as to render any serious opposition either in Europe or Egypt to the consolidation of our rule a practical impossibility. While admitting the substantial accuracy of the above statements, I dissent from the conclusions drawn therefrom. I shall endeavour to explain later on the reasons of my dissenting from the official view of Anglo-Egyptian relations. All I need assert here is that my scepticism is largely shared by the



persons most competent to appreciate the sentiments of the native and of the non-official foreign residents, English as well as French, Germans, and Italians. The former, with or without reason, object to the general character of our administration ; the latter, while raising no objection to the general character of our administration, hold that our present autocratic system of government conducted by British officials would be even more open to criticism if, as Lord Cromer proposes, the various International institutions now existing in Egypt were done away with and their functions placed under the direct administration of British officials acting nominally as the servants of the Khedivial Government, but in reality receiving their instructions directly from the British agency.

It is a commonplace saying that a despotism exercised by a benevolent despot is the best system of government possible in this imperfect world of ours. Egypt under British rule affords to-day a sort of object-lesson both of the merits and demerits of an autocratic administration. Lord Cromer is, I admit most gladly, a high-minded and benevolent autocrat. Ismail, however, in the days of his grandeur, was not a more



absolute ruler than the present representative of Great Britain on the banks of the Nile. On the other hand, no principles could be more diametrically opposite to one another than those on which Egypt has been administered under an Oriental and a British system of rule. No honest critic can dispute the zeal, the absolute integrity, and the ability with which Lord Cromer rules Egypt. Indeed, the autocracy conferred upon him in virtue of our military occupation is due in no small degree to the general respect entertained by the Egyptians for his personal character. At the same time, the invariable defects of autocratic rule have made themselves manifest. To put the matter shortly, Egypt—under autocratic, though genuinely benevolent rule—has made enormous material progress, but her moral progress has been of a retrograde description.

All the work of administration has been entrusted to a number of English officials. The native element has been gradually eliminated from all posts not of a subordinate character. The British officials, men, for the most part, imperfectly acquainted with the language, the laws, the customs, the traditions, and the

religion of the native population, have been employed to reorganise the country in accordance with English ideas unintelligible to, and unappreciated by, the vast majority of the Egyptian people. The Pashas, the wealthy landowners, the Cadis, the Sheiks, and the educated classes, composed in the main of Armenians, Syrians, and Copts, have been practically deprived of the authority they exercised up to the time of our occupation ; and the result of this deprivation has been, to say the least, not altogether satisfactory. As things are, the only limitations still left which militate against the absolute supremacy of an autocratic administration are to be found in the International institutions which were established in Egypt long previously to our occupation, and whose abolition is believed to be contemplated by the British authorities.

I fully agree that if our British policy is to be carried on in the future as in the past, with the view of what—for want of a better word—I may call the Anglification of Egypt, the removal of these International institutions is essential to the accomplishment of our object. I hold as strongly as ever that British supremacy

in Egypt is a matter of vital importance to England as the mistress of India. But I hold no less strongly that this supremacy can be best secured and maintained by adopting the course we have pursued in many of the Native States of India, and governing Egypt under a British Resident, thus leaving the internal administration in native hands. I am fully alive to the difficulties that beset this solution of the Egyptian question, but I think those difficulties would be far less than those of the policy our British authorities have hitherto pursued, that of administering the internal affairs of Egypt by highly paid British officials, and by eliminating the native element.

Holding this opinion, I doubt whether the removal of the few existing international administrations in Egypt and the consequent extension of our "Anglification" policy would be for the advantage of England. Any such extension would lead inevitably to the further increase of British officialdom and to the more complete exclusion of the natives from part or share in the administration of their own country. This view of mine is also shared by the non-English European community in Egypt, but upon com-

pletely different grounds. The foreigners, as we English call French, Germans, Austrians, Italians, Greeks, and all other nationalities, who have Consular representatives at the Khedivial Court, are strongly opposed to any abolition of the international administrations, and still more to their absorption by the paramount Power which for the last twenty-five years has occupied Egypt by her troops. They object, not because they have any abstract dislike to our military occupation, which, as they are well aware, guarantees their personal safety. They are utterly indifferent, as a body, to the exclusion of the natives from all posts of any administrative importance. They object to the policy attributed to our British authorities simply and solely because, in their opinion, the remaining international administrations are the sole guarantees for the preservation of the exceptional rights and privileges secured to them by treaties and conventions concluded long before the British occupation was ever dreamt of.

Already the international administrations which under dual control were completely in French hands are now under British control. The Daira Sanieh Administration, which was

filled exclusively with French officials, has been suppressed by the liquidation of the loan. The "Caisse de la Dette," which owed its existence to the Goschen-Joubert Convention, concluded with Ismail Pasha in 1857, and was appointed to supervise and control the expenditure of the revenues specially affected to the service of the debt due to the bondholders, lies under sentence of death.

As soon as the Anglo-French Agreement was signed and sealed two years ago, the British Government, acting, if I am rightly informed, on the advice of the British authorities in Egypt, used the free hand accorded to her by the agreement to request the Khedivial Government to issue a decree announcing that the powers of the "Caisse de la Dette" should in 1912 be transferred to the English financial adviser of the Khedive. Such a request was, under the circumstances, tantamount to an order, and the decree in question was issued with the approval of the Government of the French Republic. In as far as I know, it has never yet been submitted formally to the Powers not parties to the secret treaty; but as it chiefly concerns the bondholders, whose interests are amply protected



by the improved credit and solvency of Egypt under British administration, it is not likely to be made the subject of protest on the part of any of the European Powers, or of their subjects in Egypt, who have no great interest in the market value of Egyptian securities, but who have a very strong interest in the maintenance of the two remaining international institutions which still stand in the way of the complete Anglification of Egypt. These institutions are the Capitulations and the International Tribunals, commonly called the Mixed Courts.

These tribunals owe their existence to the genius of Egypt's one great statesman, whose object was to establish an independent authority in Egypt which would cripple the autocratic power of the then Khedive and would present a barrier against any absolute autocracy which might succeed that of Ismail Pasha. Nubar's original idea was to come to an agreement by which the great Powers of Europe should consent to suspend the jurisdiction exercised by the various Consular Courts in Egypt, and to transfer their civil and criminal authority, in any case to which foreigners were parties, to an International Tribunal whose members were to be nominated



by the leading foreign Governments and approved by the Khedive. Finally, Nubar had to accept a compromise by which criminal jurisdiction, in cases to which foreigners were parties, was left to the old Consular Courts, but transferred in all civil suits to the Mixed Courts.

These courts were also empowered to give judgment in all suits between foreigners of the same or different nationality, or in suits between foreigners and natives. They were given an authority, unknown, I believe, to any other country, to try actions brought by individuals against the State, to call upon the State to carry out any judgments given by them, and to levy execution upon State property in the event of these judgments not being carried into effect. They are bound to base their judgments in accordance with an Egyptian code identical in almost every respect, other than the one alluded to above, with the Code Napoleon. They were to exercise their jurisdiction for five years, with power of renewal on the part of the Khedivial and the European Governments. It was agreed that, in the event of their jurisdiction being set aside from any cause, the civil jurisdiction of the Consular Courts was to revive automatically.

It was agreed, further, that French, Italian, and Arabic were to be the only languages used in the Courts.

After the *entente cordiale*, English was added to the list, but as very few of the judges understand English, and still fewer of the advocates who practise in the courts can speak or read English, this concession is of very little practical value. I cordially sympathise with the irritation expressed by my fellow-countrymen when, in a country occupied by British troops and administered by British officials, they discover that if they go to law they must have their grievances laid before an International Court mainly composed of foreign judges, their evidence submitted in a foreign tongue, their claims defended by foreign counsel, and the award of their judges given in a language which, for the most part, they are utterly unable to understand. The only consolation I can offer them is that their sad plight is due to the reluctance displayed by a long succession of British Governments to look facts in the face and to avail themselves of opportunities for converting a virtual Protectorate into one openly avowed and distinctly declared. If, however, I happened to

be a foreigner residing in Egypt, I should object equally strongly to being judged by an English court whose proceedings were conducted in English, a language which not one foreigner in a hundred can understand, and, as follows logically, in accordance with English common law, a law which has no code, and is based on judge-made decisions, inaccessible to the world at large and unintelligible in many cases even to English lawyers.

I fully admit that foreigners in Egypt, even if subject to British law administered by British courts, might have absolute confidence in the integrity of our judges and their genuine desire to administer impartial justice. I am not sure, however, how far this confidence is quite as universal as we flatter ourselves, but I am certain that any proposal to abolish the International Tribunals and to replace them by English courts would excite the gravest alarm and encounter the strongest opposition on the part of all the foreign population in Egypt.

It is even more certain that if the British Government attempted to avail itself of the free hand guaranteed by the Anglo-French agreement in order to abolish the Capitulations, the attempt

would excite the almost unanimous opposition of the European colony, inclusive of the great number of English residents, who are not connected directly or indirectly with the British administration. In virtue of the Capitulations, foreigners in Egypt enjoy a number of immunities not accorded to the natives. Thus, for example, foreigners are not subject to taxes. They contribute little or nothing directly to the Egyptian revenue. Their only contribution consists in the amount they may have to pay as traders, in the form of customs dues on exports or imports. If they are accused of any serious criminal offence they can only be tried before their own Consular Court, and even if they should be found guilty, the punishment to be inflicted upon them is determined by their Consular judge, and, in most instances, is utterly inadequate to the offence. Finally, their houses are inviolable, and can only be entered by the Egyptian policeman if accompanied by the Consul of the nationality to which the occupant of the house belongs. These rights, secured by the Capitulations, most of which exist in virtue of conventions concluded long ago, extend not only to genuine foreigners, but

to aliens who, in return for value received, have been placed under the protection of foreign Powers as naturalised subjects. Thus the large and growing foreign population of Egypt is practically outside the law, and the Capitulations are naturally regarded by the foreign residents as a sort of Magna Charta of their rights, liberties, and privileges.

It is impossible to dispute the fact that the existence of these exceptions—based as they are upon a condition of things which has long since ceased to exist—constitutes a scandal and an abuse, and inflicts a grave injustice upon the Egyptian people. It is to the credit of the British Government that, since the days of Mahomet Ali, they have done everything in their power to deter British subjects from availing themselves unduly of the privileges they enjoy under the Capitulations. It was also through British support that Nubar was enabled to obtain the suspension of Consular jurisdiction in Egypt in respect of civil suits. France has for some years past discouraged the abuse of these exemptions by French subjects, though without meeting with much support from the French colony in Cairo and Alexandria.



It would be invidious to cite names, but it is well known in Egypt that some of the minor Powers who are represented by Consuls at the Vice-Regal Court have allowed and still allow their Consuls to assist their fellow-countrymen in enforcing the privileges accorded by the Capitulations to their utmost limit, and to do so with the result if not with the object of defrauding the Egyptian revenue.

I have always held that it would be the first duty of England—if ever she assumes a Protectorate over Egypt—to obtain the cancelment of the Capitulations. I hold that opinion as strongly as ever. This reform, however, we can never carry out in practice till we take over the public debt of Egypt, and make it known to the world that we regard Egypt as being under the protection of Great Britain, to be defended against internal or external attack with the whole force of the British Empire. I do not see any probability that action of the kind I recommend will be undertaken by our present Government or by any Government we are likely to see in office, till such time as the British public realises the truth that an avowed Protectorate over Egypt is the sole



manner by which England can continue, permanently, to retain the command of our highway to India. The present time, therefore, is not one in which we can pursue the prosecution of reforms in Egypt, which can only be carried into practice with the assent of the foreign Powers of Europe.

I noticed recently a passage in a speech delivered by Lord St. Aldwyn, better known to us as Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, in which the late Chancellor of the Exchequer claimed credit for the success which the Unionist Government had obtained in Egypt. The passage was as follows: "They established England as a Trustee for civilisation in Egypt with the assent of other Powers." It would be difficult to express the popular opinion entertained in England as to our present position in Egypt more fully in fewer words. It would be still more difficult to make more inaccurate statements in so few words. England is not a Trustee for Europe. Nobody ever appointed her to this imaginary trust. She occupied Egypt with her troops of her own free will, in defiance of the protest raised by France at the time of our bombardment of Alexandria. The services she has

undoubtedly rendered to Egypt have been mainly, if not solely, due to our military occupation of the country, not to any imaginary mandate with which we have been entrusted by Europe. No Continental Power, except France, has ever given its formal assent to our occupation. Germany alone has gone out of her way to express approval of the way in which we have hitherto interpreted the "free hand" given us by France, and by France alone; and the assent of Europe has never yet been accorded to our occupation by any International Congress or Conference.

On many occasions foreign Powers have asked us for information as to the date on which we intend to fulfil our repeated assurances that we would terminate our occupation and withdraw our troops. These demands have been met by the evasive answer that we still adhere to our plighted word, but that the time has not arrived when we could carry out our avowed purpose, because Egypt is not yet qualified for independent self-government. I repeat, as I have often asserted before now, that I am firmly convinced that, from the date of our occupation after Tel-el-Kebir, and at any rate up to the Soudan Campaign, no matter what party may have been in

office, England was genuinely desirous of withdrawing her troops from Egypt, and acted with perfect good faith in its assurances to the above effect. But this conviction—a point on which I speak with some knowledge—is not shared, and cannot well be expected to be shared, by other European nations. Moreover, if my personal conviction were shared by the world at large, the fact would not modify our present position.

There can, I think, be no reasonable doubt that Germany was in the right in her contention that the secret compact between England and France, as to the form of administration to be introduced into Morocco under the Anglo-French Agreement, could not be held as binding upon other European Powers, which had political or commercial rights or interests in the Shereefian kingdom, unless and until it had been submitted to and approved by an International Conference. Germany insisted upon the submission of this compact to a Conference. France gave way. The Conference was held, and has ultimately decided in favour of the German contention. It is no concern of mine to discuss whether Germany was well advised or otherwise in objecting to the Anglo-French Agreement. I am dealing

with facts as they are, not, perhaps, as I personally could have wished that they had been. All I wish to point out is that the decision of the Algeciras Conference, confirming as it does the non-validity of the free hand accorded to France in Morocco by the Anglo-French Agreement, applies logically to the free hand in Egypt accorded to England by France.

According to the precedent established at Algeciras, any European Power which has political or commercial interests or rights in Egypt would be entitled to refuse her consent to any substantial changes which England might propose to introduce into the relations between Egypt and other Continental Powers, till these changes have been approved by an International Conference. There can be no reasonable doubt that if such a Conference were to meet, its first step would be to demand an explicit explanation from England as to whether she intends her military occupation to be permanent or temporary; and, on the latter hypothesis, when the occupation was to end, or, on the former hypothesis, what guarantees were to be given for the preservation of the rights now possessed in Egypt by the subjects of other nations than the two parties to the

free hand agreement. If this is so, I think all British statesmen—to whatever party they may belong, or whatever their views may be as to the internal administration of Egypt—will agree with me in holding that the present moment is singularly infelicitous for proposing the formal recognition of a British Protectorate over Egypt, or for suggesting the expediency of cancelling the Capitulations and abolishing the International Tribunals.

From remote antiquity it has been recognised as an elementary rule of building that the foundations should be laid before the superstructure is commenced. The same rule applies to political architecture. In the case of Egypt, every successive British Government has ignored this initial principle. They have built the superstructure while the foundations still rest upon desert sand. In the course of a following chapter it will be my endeavour to show how this fundamental mistake has thwarted the policy of our British administration in Egypt.



## CHAPTER III

### THE EASTERN QUESTION

THE Eastern question is the old question of the struggle between the Cross and the Crescent as personified by the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. This question has influenced the whole course of European statesmanship from the days of Peter the Great; and though during the half-century which has elapsed since the conclusion of the Crimean War it has assumed a more definite character, we are still far from any final solution.

The changes in the Near East during the nineteenth century have all tended to the aggrandisement of Russia in the Balkan Peninsula, and to the impoverishment of Turkey in Europe. Within the memory of men still living, Greece, Bulgaria, Servia, the Moldavian Principalities, Crete, Bosnia, and Herzegovina have



one after the other been detached from the rule of Islam and have become independent Christian communities all more or less under the protection of the great Slav Empire of the North. The barriers which half a century ago Europe endeavoured to establish against the advance of Russia towards Constantinople have proved unavailing ; and it may be said without exaggeration that the European provinces, in which Turkish authority is still paramount, are confined to Adrianople and Macedonia. The treaty of San Stefano was cancelled by the Congress of Berlin, but the various limitations imposed by this Congress at the instance of England have gradually been declared null and void. Sebastopol has been rebuilt and refortified. The Black Sea has been converted into a Russian lake ; and the Sultan has been coerced into accepting the position of a Russian Satrap holding his tenure of sovereignty upon sufferance. As a matter of fact, the Russian armies could have entered Constantinople, after they had forced their way across the Balkans, had it not been for the hostile attitude of England. It is equally a matter of fact that Russia's fleet could during the last dozen years have entered

the Bosphorus any day when they had wished to do so, and could have compelled the Sultan either to abdicate or to place himself under the protection of the Russian flag. It has long been a surprise to the Foreign Offices of Western Europe that Russia should have refused so persistently to exercise her power against Turkey. The probable explanation of this delay is that after the defeat of China by Japan, Russia was led to postpone any further aggression upon the moribund Ottoman Empire in view of seizing the opportunity for crushing Japan, and thus making herself the virtual mistress of the Celestial Empire. I do not say—I have no authority to say—that this is so. All I can say is that the hypothesis I have suggested seems to be the most probable explanation of Russia having failed to avail herself of the Macedonian insurrection, and of the outrages by which it was suppressed, in order to carry into execution the policy which was affirmed by the treaty of San Stefano. Throughout her long and tortuous progress in dealing with the vicissitudes of the Eastern question, Russia has exhibited such remarkable activity and astuteness that the world perhaps at

large gave her credit for more foresight than she really possesses.

Anybody acquainted with the Balkan States is aware that their rulers, their ministers and their leading statesmen are, with very rare exceptions, puppets who shape their policy in accordance with the views which for the time being find favour at St. Petersburg. Every one of them knows that he holds his position on condition of not incurring the displeasure of the great Slav Empire of the North, and the fate of the few malcontents who have attempted to pursue an independent policy has not been of a kind to encourage any repetition of the experiment. I do not see myself that the conduct of Russia in this respect can fairly be condemned by the outer world. For the last few years her paramount authority in the Balkan Peninsula has been employed to preserve the peace of Europe by retarding any violent solution of the Eastern question, and by discouraging any open insurrection against the rule of Islam. If, however, circumstances should force Russia to the conclusion that it is for her interests to bring the Eastern question to a crisis, she can do so whenever she chooses by letting loose the

insurrectionary forces which militate against the maintenance of peace in the Near East. Russia has only got to let it be understood in the Balkan Peninsula that she is in favour of a rising, whose object would be the overthrow of Turkish rule west of the Bosphorus, and that in case of need she would support the insurgents, and the whole country-side would respond to the covert appeal. No man is less inclined than I am to join in the sentimental outcry against the "unspeakable Turk." Still, common justice compels me to admit that the Christian provinces have sustained grievous wrongs at the hands of their Moslem masters, and that these wrongs are of a character not easily to be forgotten, or still less forgiven. I may doubt whether Serbs, Bulgarians or Macedonians would gain by passing from the rule of Turkey under that of Russia. But I cannot honestly blame them if they care more for revenging themselves upon their hereditary enemy than they do for the preservation of such qualified liberties as they now enjoy.

In such a contingency as the one I contemplate, the general course of events may easily be foretold. However far the decay of the Otto-

man Empire may have progressed, however hopeless may be the prospects of its regeneration, the Turks have not lost their military vigour; and, as was shown during the war with Greece, they are more than a match for any forces which could be brought against them by the States of the Balkan Peninsula. Supposing—as might easily happen—the Turkish armies were to carry all before them, Russia would be bound to interfere for the protection of the Slav States. She might plead with justice that her position as the head of the Slav races, and her manifest destiny as the champion of the Cross against the Crescent, compelled her to subordinate every other consideration to the duty of opposing the re-establishment of Turkish rule in the Balkan Peninsula.

Russia at the time when I write these lines is confronted with an internal revolution far graver in its possible consequences than her disastrous and almost ignominious defeat both on sea and land by Japan. No man—certainly, not I for one—can predict with any confidence whether the Czar or the Duma may carry the day in the end. There is one prediction, however, that I will venture to make, and that is, when the



struggle has been ended, the victor in the conflict—whether he be the Czar or the Commune under the name of the Duma—will try to stamp out the fires, smouldering under the ashes, by reopening the irrepressible Eastern question.

There can be no doubt that a successful war with Turkey, ending, as it probably would end, in the occupation of Constantinople and in the substitution of the Cross for the Crescent in the sometime Cathedral of St. Sofia, would create an amount of enthusiasm throughout Russia which could never have been created by the most brilliant successes gained over the army and navy of Japan. A campaign for the expulsion of the Turk from Europe would appeal to the traditions, the superstitions, and the aspirations of the Russian people in a far different fashion from that in which a war waged in order to avert an unknown yellow peril in Japan ever did appeal. No doubt the vast majority of the Russian soldiery believed that, in fighting the Japanese, they were carrying out the mission of Russia to exterminate the infidel. But the infidel whom the Mujik has been taught for centuries to hate is not the follower of Buddha, but the follower of Mahomet, the false prophet



whose armies would, according to Russian belief, have long ago made Islam the creed of the Slav races had it not been for the heroic resistance of Holy Russia. In the Western world the crusading spirit has died out. In Russia it is still a living force. If her campaign against Turkey proved successful she might recover at home—and to a great extent abroad—any prestige she might have lost by her withdrawal from Manchuria. *Reculer pour mieux sauter* is a principle which Russia has often before now applied in practice, and applied in the main with success.

All speculations of this kind, based upon what may happen supposing anything should happen which has not yet happened and may never happen, are of the stuff that “dreams are made of.” Everything points to the conclusion that the Eastern question is approaching a new, and probably a final, crisis. It is, therefore, not premature to consider how the possibly impending crisis would affect the interests of the chief European Powers, and their relations towards one another.

It is not difficult to predict that the attitude of England would be, at the outset, one of

“masterly inaction.” Those who, unfortunately for themselves, are old enough to remember the days of the Crimean War, cannot but be struck by the extraordinary change of popular sentiment throughout England in respect of Turkey.

Our sympathies were then with the Turks ; we all believed in the possible regeneration of the Ottoman Empire ; we all hoped that the result of the war would be to restore the Crimea to Turkey, and thus to hinder the Black Sea from becoming a Russian lake. We all regretted the premature termination of the war, owing to the refusal of France to continue the contest after the capture of Sebastopol. Later on, we, as a nation, saw cause to distrust our previous conviction that Turkey, when removed from the immediate fear of Russian aggression, would set her house in order and reform the abuses common to all Oriental Governments. As this hope died away, we took refuge in the belief that the Balkan States, after they had been liberated from Turkish misrule, would form themselves into independent and enlightened communities, strong enough to hold their own without the protection of Russia. Then came the Bulgarian atrocities ; and from that time the British public,

without becoming pro-Russian, became distinctly anti-Turkish.

I have no wish to defend the Midlothian campaign, but it certainly succeeded in rendering impossible for the future the friendly relations which had hitherto existed between England and Turkey. Whatever my individual prepossessions may be, I feel convinced that if Russia were to invade Turkey in the near future, no British Government, whether Conservative or Liberal, would venture to send a British fleet, and still less a British army, to uphold the authority of the Sultan in Macedonia or in Adrianople, or even in Constantinople. Apart from considerations of sentiment, British statesmanship no longer attaches the same importance as it used to do to the maintenance of Turkey in Europe, as constituting a barrier against the occupation of Constantinople by Russia. Our military occupation of Egypt has secured our highway to India, and the value of a land route from the Bosphorus to the confines of our Indian Empire, even if carried out by railways, would be of comparatively small advantage to this country. The trade of the Levant, owing to various causes which have little or no connec-

tion with politics, has passed out of English hands. Common sense shows us that if Russia once instals herself on the Bosphorus, her exclusion from Mediterranean waters is a practical impossibility ; common sense also teaches us that any danger arising from the Dardanelles becoming, in fact if not in name, a Russian possession would be far more likely to prove serious to Continental nations than to England. This being so, our interest and our conception of our duty combine to deter us from taking any active part in protecting Turkey in Europe from further Russian aggression. The statement made by the late Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords shortly before his death, that in supporting Turkey "we had backed the wrong horse," expressed somewhat crudely latter-day British sentiment towards the Ottoman Empire ; and this sentiment must inevitably dictate the policy which England would pursue in the event of the Eastern question being suddenly reopened. With regard to France, we may take it for granted that if trouble should arise in the Near East during the next few years, the Government of the Republic would certainly take no action calculated to oppose Russian intervention, while

French sentiment would be favourable, or certainly not hostile, to any aggrandisement of Russia at the cost of Turkey in Europe. The enthusiasm excited by the Russian Alliance is not as keen nowadays as at the period of the Czar's visit, and the belief that her "ally and friend" would one day or other assist France in the recovery of her lost province has by this time been greatly shaken. Still, the belief has not altogether vanished amidst the French electorate, and though French politicians have by now realised its groundlessness, they cling, with or without reason, to the idea that the exceptional relations which exist between the Governments of Paris and St. Petersburg are a tower of strength for France. Moreover, the Near Eastern question is one in which France has less political or national interest than any other of the Great Powers of Europe, while her financial interests must dispose her to look with favour on any policy which might improve the value of Russian securities.

Italy, again, can hardly be expected to offer any effective opposition in the event of such a contingency as that under consideration. As a naval Power she would certainly view with



disfavour the command of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles being transferred to the hands of Russia, involving, as a matter of course, the free entry of the Russian navy into the waters of the Mediterranean. This disfavour would undoubtedly be intensified by the close alliance existing between Russia and France. Supposing any proposal to alter the *status quo* in the Near East were to be opposed by an European coalition, Italy might, I think, be inclined to take sides with the coalition ; but assuming, as I do, that no such coalition is likely to be forthcoming, I can see no reason why Italy should incur the risk and cost of intervening actively in a controversy in whose solution she is only indirectly interested. It is worth, too, bearing in mind that any antagonism Italy might entertain to Russian aggression in the Near East might easily be removed if Italy were led to suppose that in any settlement of the Eastern question in the interest of Russia, she herself could reckon upon the acquisition of Tripoli as her share in the partition of the Ottoman Empire. There is, in as far as I can form an opinion, one first-class Continental Power, and one only, which would be prepared to resist the



advance of Russia in the Near East, if she could see any prospect of her resistance being crowned with success. That Power, I need hardly say, is Austria. A glance at the map of Eastern Europe suffices to show that if Russia could establish herself on the Bosphorus and thereby obtain, indirectly, if not directly, the command of the Black Sea coast from the mouth of the Danube to the Straits of the Dardanelles, Austria would not only lose the chance she has always counted upon of succeeding to the inheritance of the "Sick Man of Europe," but would be in peril of forfeiting her own independent existence. Up to the period of the Austro-Prussian War in 1866, the Hapsburg Empire would undoubtedly have offered the most determined opposition to any attempt to disturb the *status quo* in the Near East for the aggrandisement of Russia. But during the four decades which have come and gone since the battle of Sadowa, Austria-Hungary has been subjected to a process of gradual disintegration.

Her three principal races—the Germans, the Slavs, and the Magyars—have throughout all this period been engaged in an internecine

triangular conflict. The jealousies between these rival nationalities are too violent to admit of any serious consideration of their common interests. The one bond of union between the different provinces of the Empire is the existence of a common army, acting under one command. The Magyars are now agitating for the formation of a separate Magyar army, officered exclusively by Magyars and using the Magyar language in giving orders to the Magyar soldiery. The Czechs are clamouring for a Parliament of their own, and in order to accomplish their end have brought parliamentary Government in Austria to a deadlock. The Germans, who, when all is said and done, constitute the backbone of the Hapsburg monarchy, are openly avowing a desire for severance from Hungary, and do not conceal their conviction that the best thing for the German provinces in Austria would be their incorporation in the German Empire. Given this state of things, and it follows that Austria could not safely resist any advance towards the Bosphorus on the part of Russia unless she could count with certainty upon the support of Germany. I think this conclusion will not be disputed by any student of European politics

who is content to look at facts as they are, not as one might wish them to be. Granted this conclusion, it follows that Germany is master of the situation, and it is desirable, therefore, to understand what her policy in respect of the Near East has been in the past or is likely to be for the future.

Most English writers on Continental politics seem to me to overlook the fact that Germany's foreign policy is and must be controlled by two distinct and to some extent inconsistent aims. The first of these aims is to give no cause of offence to Russia as the paramount Power in the Dual Alliance. The second is to uphold the strength of the Triple Alliance. The only way in which this complicated policy can be carried into practical effect is by maintaining the *status quo* in European Turkey as long as such maintenance may be within the range of possibility. I frequently notice comments in the English Press upon the alleged indifference of Germany to the wrongs of the Macedonians, or upon the lack of cordial co-operation on the part of Germany in the dictatorial demands for drastic reforms addressed to the Sultan by the representatives of England, France, and Russia.

I can easily understand our English point of view. We English are by nature a sentimental people, and the wrongs of oppressed nationalities and persecuted creeds always appeal strongly to British sympathy, so long especially as the redress of those wrongs has got to be effected, if at all, by our neighbours, not by ourselves. The saying attributed to Prince Bismarck at the time of the Bulgarian atrocities, that the bones of a single Pomeranian Grenadier were of more importance in his eyes than the liberation of Bulgaria from Turkish rule, was undoubtedly regarded at the time of its utterance by Mr. Gladstone and his supporters in the Midlothian campaign as an utterance so cynical as to be almost diabolical in its character. I cannot, however, conceal my opinion that in reality the policy so crudely enunciated by the Chancellor was more humane than that advocated by Mr. Gladstone. Both statesmen were perfectly well aware that neither they nor their fellow-countrymen had the slightest intention of going to war in order to redress the grievances of Bulgarians, Armenians, Macedonians, or any of the Christian races subject to the dominion of Islam. They must also—if we give them

credit for ordinary intelligence—have been equally aware that these grievances could not be redressed without war. The difference between the two statesmen was that the former gave the Bulgarians clearly to understand they had nothing to hope for from Germany, while the latter encouraged the Bulgarians to protract an unequal struggle by declamatory denunciations of their Turkish oppressors, which, intentionally or unintentionally, buoyed them up with false hopes of British intervention. If this is so, the policy of Prince Bismarck may fairly be considered the more humane of the two.

Bearing these facts in mind, I view with regret the criticisms which have appeared in the Press, and especially in the Liberal Press, of Great Britain insinuating that Germany has been guilty of selfishness in not exerting her influence at Constantinople more warmly on behalf of the reforms which other European Powers have urged upon the acceptance of the Porte. In as far as Germany possesses any influence at Yildiz Kiosk, she owes it to the fact that she has throughout recognised the extreme difficulties of the Sultan's position, has admitted that the Turks equally with the Macedonians



have grave cause of complaint, and has treated "Abdul the damned" with a consideration fairly due to a sovereign who, however his authority may have declined in Europe, is still the commander of the Faithful, the recognised head of Islam throughout Asia and Africa. From all that I can learn, Germany has never yet failed to support any demand for reforms in European Turkey addressed to the Porte by the so-called Concert of Europe. All that can be said is that this support has not been as violent and intemperate in tone as that of other European Powers.

Germany, I admit, does not conceal her wish to postpone for the present any drastic solution of the Eastern question. In so wishing she is, I venture to assert, in the right. As things are, the Gordian knot must be cut, if cut at all, by Russia. Russian intervention must necessitate an Austro-Russian war, in which Germany could hardly avoid taking sides either with Russia or with Austria. Happily, the policy of Russia has hitherto coincided with that of Austria in avoiding any rupture with Turkey. So long as the conflict between the Czar and the Duma remains undecided, Russia is bound over to keep the

peace in the Near East. Whatever may be the case with other Powers, England's chief interest is the maintenance of peace; and therefore she has every cause to be satisfied with the policy of Germany, which is directed to the preservation of the *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula. In Bosnia and in Herzegovina, Austria has shown extraordinary capacity for enlisting the support of a Mussulman population in the establishment of law and order under her protectorate. The extension of her authority along the southern sea-board of the Balkan Peninsula would be the best solution of the Eastern question. But in order that this, or any other similar experiment, should have a chance of success, it is all-important to postpone any sudden overthrow of Turkish rule in Europe. This end the Near Eastern policy of Germany has constantly in view, and an acknowledgment of this bottom fact explains many of the apparent inconsistencies of German statecraft.

If ever there was a place marked out by nature as the capital of a great Empire it is the city of Constantinople. Standing as it does at the mouth of the Golden Horn, it commands, or ought to command, the narrow straits of the

Bosphorus which lead from the Black Sea into the Sea of Marmora, and by so doing commands also the narrower straits through which the waters of the two above-named seas emerge into the Mediterranean.

In the bygone time, before the discovery of steamships and gunpowder, the capital founded by Constantine was far more impregnable than it is to-day. For commercial purposes the position is, or, more correctly speaking, was, of even greater importance. Constantinople, under the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires alike, formed the point of junction between the trade of Europe and Asia, the centre of the caravan routes connecting the two continents. The discovery of the Cape route and the construction of the Suez Canal have successively deflected the course of commerce between the East and the West from the old land routes to the comparatively new maritime routes. Still, in the near future, when direct railway communication has been established between the manufacturing centres of Europe and the markets of the East, it is certain the trunk line must pass through Constantinople, the more so as there would, I understand,

be no serious difficulty in constructing a submarine railway under the Bosphorus and thus enabling passengers and goods to be carried without change of cars from Calais to Persia, if not to India. I only allude to these facts to show that so long as Constantinople is held by an Imperial Power, as the capital, or one of the capitals, of its Empire, the command of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles becomes an imperative necessity, while the temptation to treat the Euxine and the Sea of Marmora as both coming under the category of a *mare clausum* must become well-nigh irresistible.

History confirms this view. When the capital of the Roman Empire was transferred from the Tiber to the Bosphorus, the glamour of ancient Rome survived long after her real strength had departed. Moreover, when the Emperor Constantine shifted the seat of his Government, there was no adjacent European or Asiatic Power which could contest the supremacy of his reorganised dominion. In as far as I can learn, the possession of Constantinople conferred, as a matter of course, the undisputed command of the two seas, whose approaches could only be entered through the Bosphorus

on the north and the Dardanelles on the south.

When, however, the Turks captured Constantinople in the middle of the fifteenth century, their tenure was for a long time precarious. Turkey, surrounded on her European frontiers by Christian States, which, after the decline of the Roman Empire, had acquired an independent position, and were more or less united by their common enmity to Islam, felt the necessity of closing the entrance to the Sea of Marmora against the galleys of the Venetian Republic and of the Knights of St. John. For a century after Constantinople had been renamed Stamboul, and after the Cathedral of St. Sofia had been converted into a Mohammedan mosque, no foreign ships were allowed to pass the Dardanelles even for purposes of trade. In the period to which I allude, the whole shores of the Black Sea belonged to the Ottoman Empire. Russia was hardly known as a State, and the only enemies Turkey had to take account of were the Mediterranean countries, whose sole sea access to Stamboul lay through the Dardanelles.

It was only after the first repulse sustained by the Turks before the walls of Vienna that



the Sultan Suleyman I. entered into treaties with France and Venice by which French and Venetian trading vessels were allowed to enter the Sea of Marmora and unload their cargoes in the Golden Horn. Similar rights were conceded to England before the close of the sixteenth century. It was not till the following century that Russia dealt her first blow to the Suzerainty of Turkey over the Euxine. By the treaty of Kulchuk Kainardj the Crimea was declared an independent State. Large territories bordering the Black Sea were ceded to Russia, and, what was more important, the Czar obtained the right of erecting fortresses on its shores, and of placing Russian men-of-war upon its waters, the only stipulation then made being that the commerce between Russia and Turkey should be conducted solely by Turkish vessels. This stipulation was cancelled after a few years' time, and in 1774 the Muscovite mercantile navy was allowed free right of navigation in the Euxine. Similar privileges were accorded subsequently to England, France, and Italy, but the rule by which no foreign ship of war could enter the Sea of Marmora through the Hellespont was still upheld in its integrity. Indeed, this

rule was formally confirmed in 1840, at the close of the war between Turkey and Egypt; when a convention was concluded between England, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Turkey, with the view, as far as I can ascertain, of preventing France from using her naval power to assist Mehemet Ali in his insurrection against the Sultan. The Crimean war led to the first open infraction of the rule by which no man-of-war other than those of Turkey was allowed to enter the Sea of Marmora. The navies of England and France passed through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, and entered the Black Sea with the consent, and indeed at the request, of the Turkish Government. The Crimean war resulted practically in a drawn battle, and the treaty of Paris, by which peace was concluded, partook of the nature of a compromise. The Euxine was neutralised by common consent. All trading vessels, no matter what their nationality, were given right of free navigation within its waters. The entrance of men-of-war into its waters was, however, absolutely prohibited, except in the case of cruisers of small tonnage sailing under the Russian or Turkish flags, which were employed, or said to be employed, on police

duties. Russia had long resented the limitations placed upon her naval forces in the Black Sea, and after the Franco-German war she induced the Powers represented at the conference of Paris to modify the treaty of 1856, and to allow both Turkey and Russia to keep any naval force in the Black Sea which they might respectively deem necessary. Both Powers still stood theoretically upon a footing of absolute equality. In practice, however, Russia became absolute mistress of the Black Sea. In the course of a few years, she constructed a powerful fleet in the Euxine ; she rebuilt the naval arsenal of Sebastopol ; she fortified Batoum, and converted it into a military stronghold. During these same years, Turkey—owing to her financial difficulties, to the war with Servia, to the Bulgarian insurrection, and to the general disorganisation of her Government—allowed her fleet to fall into ruin ; and beyond an effort to erect fortifications at the northern end of the Bosphorus, an effort which proved futile in consequence of Russia's objection to the forts in question being manned with guns, Turkey did nothing whatever to strengthen her hold on the straits which constitute her sole defence against any naval attack

on the part of her Muscovite neighbour. If the treaty of San Stefano—which Russia imposed upon Turkey after the passage of the Balkans—had not been cancelled by the opposition of England, all regulations restricting the passage of Russian warships between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea would probably have been swept away before many years had passed. It was the policy of Russia to lay much stress upon the immediate removal of these restrictions, as, in the event of Russian men-of-war being allowed to pass to and fro from one sea to the other, a similar privilege could not have been denied to other maritime nations. For obvious reasons it was, therefore, more conducive to Russian interests to keep in force the international regulations by which men-of-war belonging to other nations are precluded from passing the Dardanelles. If these regulations had not been in existence at the time of the Russo-Turkish war, the course of campaign would probably have been modified to the disadvantage of the former Power. If they should cease to exist while the Sultan still rules over European Turkey, the supremacy of Russia in the Black Sea might conceivably be exposed to serious damage. The present policy, therefore,

of Russia is to close the Dardanelles to ships of war belonging to other nations, and at the same time to reserve for herself the practical right of exit and ingress for her cruisers.

It is obvious to any intelligent observer that the Eastern question is working out its own solution. The process may seem slow to those who suffer under Turkish misrule, and still more to those who are longing for the death of the Sick Man of Europe in order to divide his inheritance. But the diseases under which Turkey suffers have reached a stage when no hope of any permanent recovery can reasonably be entertained. The real question in the Near East is not when Turkey will have to surrender her last possessions on the mainland of Europe, but who is to succeed her as Mistress of Constantinople, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. The slower the process of disintegration the better for the interests of England as the friend of peace. There is no need to say that, if it were not for the fear of Russian aggrandisement, the Turks would long ere this have been ejected from Europe.

Whatever may be the outcome of the Russian revolution, whether the Czar is deposed in fact,



if not in name, or whether the insurrection is crushed, the winning party in either case will probably engage in a war for the final overthrow of Turkish rule in Europe. It is, therefore, to say the least, on the cards that we may hear at no distant day of the Eastern question being on the eve of settlement. If so, the relations between England and Egypt must come up for discussion, and England surely against her will must be forced to choose at last between declaring her Protectorate over Egypt, or fixing a time for the evacuation of Egypt by her troops.

## CHAPTER IV

### EGYPT AND EUROPE

THE only European Power which has any distinct and definite opinion of its own about Egypt is, I need hardly say, Great Britain. Even this statement should be accompanied with considerable qualifications. England as a nation cannot as yet be fairly said to have any decided views, one way or another, beyond a general instinct that British supremacy in the Valley of the Nile is an advantage to her interests as the mistress of India, so long as that supremacy can be upheld without grave sacrifices on her part. This is not so much the fault of the British public as of the successive Governments, no matter whether Liberal or Conservative, which have held office since England first intervened in Egypt by force of arms. From the date of the bombardment of Alexandria up

to the day on which I write, no British Ministry has had the courage to let it be known at home and abroad that they consider the command of the country traversed by the Suez Canal to be a matter of permanent vital interest to the British Empire. Nor has any Ministry publicly acknowledged the patent fact that this command can only be secured by England taking, openly and avowedly, upon herself the administration of Egypt, or, in other words, declaring a British Protectorate over the land of the Pharaohs. It is indeed only within the last few years that any British Premier—with the possible exception of Lord Beaconsfield—has ever seemed to realize even in his own mind, that when England had once established the military occupation of Egypt, she had “come to stay.”

I am convinced myself that the repeated declarations volunteered by English statesmen, from Mr. Gladstone downwards, of our intention to withdraw the army of occupation at an early period were made in absolute good faith. This is a point on which I can speak with some authority, as for many years I was almost the only known publicist who advocated the expediency of England's assuming an avowed

and permanent Protectorate over Egypt, and, in this capacity, I was brought into frequent communication with almost all the leading statesmen and Ministers who took any serious interest in the "Egyptian Question," and they were comparatively few in number.

As soon as our troops had entered Cairo and had replaced Tewfik Pasha on the Vice-regal throne, Mr. Gladstone went out of his way to bar British occupation being converted into British Annexation. In as far as a country can ever be bound by Ministerial declarations, Mr. Gladstone left England bound hand and foot so as to preclude her from even contemplating the annexation of Egypt. With his usual ignorance of all foreign, and especially of all Eastern countries, he was firmly convinced that after a brief period of British tutelage Egypt might become fitted for popular self-government, and have learnt to appreciate the advantages of a system of administration based upon British ideas of law and order. Time after time he made honest efforts to carry out his policy, and I have reason to believe that, when the then Marquis of Hartington declared in the House of Commons that the evacuation of Egypt was

a question not of months but of weeks, he spoke on the authority of the Premier. Mr. Goschen and Lord Northbrook, who at that period were leading members of the Gladstone Ministry, were equally opposed to any idea of annexation, though I should doubt their having been equally confident of the political regeneration of Egypt under British tutelage. As years, however, went by, and as it became more and more manifest that the Egyptians, far from becoming better qualified for self-government under an autocratic British administration, were growing less and less qualified to administer their own affairs for themselves, public opinion in England became more and more reconciled to the indefinite prolongation of our sojourn in the Valley of the Nile, not as tenants at will, but as permanent freeholders. It became manifest years ago, that England's withdrawal of her army of occupation would be the signal for internal disturbances, which must necessitate the renewed occupation of Egypt by some other European Power, France for choice. This truth, however, was very slow of acceptance on the part, not only of the British public, but of the British Parliament. It was only after the Boer War, and the consequent



growth of Imperialism, that England became reconciled to the idea of an avowed Protectorate. Up to this period the Conservatives were as reluctant as the Liberals to take up "the white man's burden" in the Valley of the Nile. The then Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Cross, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Lord Randolph Churchill, Lord Wolseley, and the late Lord Derby were consistently hostile to any idea of annexation. Their conversion was only effected by the tardy discovery that our supremacy in Egypt was essential to the welfare of Great Britain as the ruler of India, and by their realising that, supposing we lost this supremacy, as we should infallibly do if we had to withdraw the army of occupation, we should lose Egypt without any chance of recovery. Moreover, the enforced evacuation of the Soudan by Mr. Gladstone's orders, the ill-starred mission of General Gordon, and his subsequent abandonment, instead of facilitating—as the author of the evacuation policy had fondly imagined—had converted the insurrection of the Dervishes into a formidable movement which seriously threatened the independence, if not the existence, of Egypt. It was impossible for England to withdraw her

troops and leave Egypt open to the invasion of the Mahdi, without national disgrace. As the year went on, it became more and more manifest that Egypt under British administration had made no appreciable advance towards self-government. Indeed, after the defeat of the Khalifa, the capture of Khartoum, the Marchand mission, and the formal annexation of the Soudan under the so-called con-dominium of King Edward VII and the Khedive, it became obvious to any statesman of ordinary intelligence that England, whether she liked or not, and whatever promises she might have made, had practically no choice except to remain encamped in Egypt.

I am convinced that this is the view entertained by the great majority of British statesmen and ministers, irrespective of their party politics. I am not equally certain that a similar conviction as to the necessity for England of retaining Egypt, as an outpost of the British Empire, is entertained by the British electorate. Public interest in England on questions of foreign policy is mainly confined to questions which in one way or another appeal to sentimental considerations. The extraordinary ma-

terial progress made by Egypt under British rule has gratified our national pride. But when it was proved to demonstration that the immense benefits we had bestowed on Egypt had failed in procuring for us the gratitude or the respect of the Egyptian population, the gilt—to use vulgar parlance—was washed off the gingerbread. If we ever have a strong Prime Minister, such as Mr. Gladstone, with a powerful Radical and Nonconformist following, it might not be impossible to patch up some compromise under which our army of occupation might be withdrawn in exchange for paper guarantees acknowledging our supremacy in Egypt; and such a compromise might conceivably be carried through Parliament without exciting any outburst of popular indignation. I do not say that such an eventuality is probable, but I do say that it is not impossible, and that, rightly or wrongly, the British public, as a body, has hardly yet realised the supreme importance to the British Empire of retaining Egypt under our military domination. In other words, the British nation acquiesces in, and sanctions our Protectorate, but is not enthusiastic about its continuance, and cannot, as I think, be expected to display any

keen enthusiasm about the retention of Egypt until such time as diplomatic fictions are discarded and Egypt is recognised at home and abroad as forming part and parcel of the British Empire.

The state of mind which I have endeavoured to depict as representing British opinion in respect of Egypt is one which foreign countries find it hard to understand. They believed from the outset, and they doubtless believe still, that England has succeeded in establishing herself as the dominant Power in Egypt by tortuous intrigues and wilful misrepresentations, and that by her success in obtaining the object of her ambition she has justified her title of "perfidious Albion."

This general distrust of England was—and I fear is—deep-rooted throughout Europe. It was, however, in France alone, up to the time of the Boer War, that this latent hostility assumed an acute form. It is only fair to admit that France had considerable ground for provocation. From the days of the Restoration, France had invariably supported Mahomet Ali in his insurrection against Turkish rule. England, on the other hand, had throughout espoused the

cause of the Sultan, and, with the aid of Russia, had stopped the advance of the Egyptian armies on Constantinople, and had intervened by force of arms to modify, in favour of Turkey, the final compromise by which in 1840 peace was established between the Suzerain and the Vassal Power. It was not without reason that France claimed to be the author of Egyptian independence, and this claim was fully recognised by Mahomet Ali and his successors up to the accession of Ismail Pasha. Napoleon III carried on the traditional policy of France in respect of Egypt, and it was mainly owing to his personal support that the Suez Canal was carried to completion in defiance of the persistent opposition of Great Britain. Later on, when Ismail Pasha's lavish expenditure could only be continued by constant loans, France financed Egypt on much the same principle as, on a larger scale, she has recently financed Russia. Indeed, up to 1870, English financiers and English bond holders had little or nothing to do with Egyptian securities. Thus, at the period of which I speak, French influence was supreme at the Khedivial Court. The vast majority of the foreign officials employed in the



Egyptian public service were of French origin. French was the only European language with which the ministers, the officials, the Khedive, the Princes and the Court were familiar, and, so long as the Second Empire lasted, the influence of France in all political and financial affairs affecting Egypt was almost uncontested. Even after the deposition of Ismail, France continued under the Dual Control to exercise an authority in Egyptian affairs almost, if not quite, equal to that of England, and this authority she might have maintained to the present day if the Freycinet Ministry had not been misled by the advice of Ferdinand de Lesseps, and in consequence recalled her fleet when England requested the co-operation of France in the bombardment of Alexandria. Never was so disastrous a blunder committed on such untrustworthy advice. France, with her usual ignorance of foreign countries, seriously believed M. de Lesseps' assurances that the British fleet and the British army would be defeated by Arabi and his followers, or perhaps, to speak more accurately, would encounter such formidable resistance on the part of the insurgents as to justify French intervention in Egypt and enable

her to dictate her own terms alike to the Khedive, the mutineers, and the British Government. France has nobody except herself to blame for the fact that after Tel-el-Kebir England abolished the Dual Control and declared her intention of administering the affairs of Egypt herself, subject to the proviso that she pledged her word to withdraw her military occupation, as soon as Egypt had been so reformed under British rule as to render her competent to administer her own affairs—a condition which never has been realised, and, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, seems well nigh incapable of realisation.

If our foreign critics, who are always denouncing the perfidy of British policy in respect of Egypt, would endeavour to look at hard facts, they would have to acknowledge that after England had occupied Egypt for four years, she made a *bonâ fide*, though unsuccessful, attempt to carry out her plighted word. In 1885 Lord Salisbury's Government, at the instigation of Lord Randolph Churchill, made overtures to the Porte for the conclusion of an arrangement by which England might consider herself justified in withdrawing her troops from

Egypt. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was our representative appointed by the British Government, Mukhtar Pasha Ghazi by the Turkish. The two plenipotentiaries met by common consent in Cairo to discuss the terms of the proposed convention, and after a protracted discussion they agreed that, on the withdrawal of our army of occupation, the duty of maintaining order in Egypt should be entrusted to Turkish troops, subject to a written engagement that if order should not be maintained, Turkey, in as far as she was concerned, should offer no opposition to the return of a British army of occupation. How far this engagement would have been binding is open to question. Whatever may have been the theoretical merits or demerits of the Wolff-Mukhtar convention, there can be no question as to the plain fact that, if we had withdrawn from Egypt, our chance of ever returning there, as masters, would have been more than problematical. It was only by accident we escaped from a disastrous position. The draft convention had been signed and sealed by the plenipotentiary envoys of England and Turkey, it had been approved by the former Power and only required the

sanction of the latter to become law. At the eleventh hour, however, France exerted her diplomatic influence at Constantinople to induce the Sultan to refuse his signature to the convention framed by his chosen Commissioner. Whether this intervention on the part of France was due to a rigid regard for her traditional policy as the protectress of Egypt against Turkey, or whether it was due to French petulance and to French distrust and jealousy of England in all matters affecting Egypt, I do not undertake to decide. All I venture to state is that France saved us from the consequences of our own folly : and that for the second, and not the last, time in our dealings with Egypt.

It is only in human nature that France should bitterly resent her discomfiture, all the more because it was mainly due to her own action. From the defeat of Arabi up to the close of the Boer War, the annals of Egypt are one long record of French attempts to weaken the supremacy of England by underground intrigues with every party and every interest in the Khedivial Court and the Soudan, which was hostile, from whatever motive, to the British occupation.

It was only after the capture of Khartoum and the collapse of the Marchand Mission that France gave up as hopeless the idea of recovering her lost ascendancy in Egypt and accepted our military occupation as an accomplished fact. So long as England seemed likely to succumb to the Boers, all the Continental nations, with scarcely an exception, sympathised with the efforts of France to upset British supremacy in Egypt; and if it had not been for the refusal of Germany to assist in the Convocation of an International Conference to regulate the relations between England and Egypt, France would probably have succeeded in the efforts she made to force England to terminate her unavowed Protectorate. As soon, however, as the course of the war in the Far East, and the unexpected defeat of Russia by Japan, had deprived the Dual Alliance of its former value, as regarded France, the latter Power recognised the importance of coming to an understanding with England. The result of this recognition was the Anglo-French agreement, by which France agreed to give England a free hand in Egypt in return for England agreeing to give France a free hand in Morocco. This agreement has subsequently developed into the



*Entente Cordiale.* For the present it is enough to say that it has removed any immediate possibility of a Continental coalition against our continued occupation of Egypt. France was the leading member of this abortive coalition, and now that she has retired from the coalition there is no other European State at once able and willing to undertake its leadership. The plain truth is that when once the exaggerated, though, to some extent genuine, sympathy for the Boer cause was dispelled by the logic of facts, there was no Continental nation except France which had any strong personal interest in the Egyptian Question. Under our Protectorate and our policy of the "open door," Egypt is as free to traders and investors of every civilised nation as it is to our own people. Foreigners of all races have the same legal rights and privileges as are accorded to English subjects: while, so long as the Capitulations are held in respect, they enjoy special advantages not possessed by them outside the Ottoman Empire. This being so, it is idle to imagine that any Continental nation has sufficient commercial or political interest in Egypt to induce her to resent our military occupation of the Nile Valley on the ground of

its being an unauthorised aggrandisement of the British Empire.

It would appear as if—since France has withdrawn her antagonism—England's Protectorate over Egypt was likely to be free from opposition of any kind on the part of Europe. There is, however, one aspect of the Algeciras Conference which cannot be left out of sight in any calculation of the outlook for Egypt in the near future.

France had learnt nothing from the loss of her colonial possessions in India and in North America. Then, as now, the colonial policy of France was to exploit her colonies for the exclusive benefit of her own people and her own trade. This is the policy she has since pursued in Tunis, in Madagascar, in Cochin China, and there can be no reasonable doubt that this was the policy she intended to pursue in Morocco. I suppose that some day or other we shall know more than we do at present of the negotiations which must have preceded the conclusion of the Anglo-French agreement. Meanwhile, there is a strong antecedent probability that the first overtures came from France. The idea of a deal by which France was to pledge herself to give England a free hand

in Egypt in consideration of our allowing France to do what she liked in Morocco was, to my thinking, too subtle a one to have been conceived by a British brain. The advantage, however, accruing to England from the formal recognition by France of our supremacy in Egypt was well worth an undertaking on our part that we would offer no opposition to any policy France might think fit to adopt in Morocco. The settlement of our Newfoundland controversy with France was an even more solid advantage than the surrender of any hypothetical claims on the part of France to a voice in the administration of Egypt.

The conception, moreover, that the conclusion of a secret treaty—by which France and England agreed to support a common policy in respect of Egypt, where the latter exercised a virtual Protectorate, and in which the former contemplated establishing a similar Protectorate—would, on its disclosure, command the approval of all European Powers, seems to me more in accordance with French than with British diplomacy. The ignorance of foreign policy, which is so characteristic of French statesmanship, and which was so signally illustrated by

M. Delcassé's persistent belief in the Dual Alliance, may excuse his delusion that the assent of England would suffice to remove any objection on the part of third parties to the virtual, if not the nominal, annexation of Morocco by France. The treaty in question was supposed to guarantee the maintenance of the "Open Door" principle for a limited number of years, but experience has taught Continental nations that the "Open Door" can easily be closed, as was the case in Tunis, by a series of restrictions under which no one, except a Frenchman, can carry on business successfully in a French colony. "Tunisification" is a barbarous word, but it expresses clearly enough the process by which France would inevitably have endeavoured to keep Morocco a private preserve for French traders, colonists and officials, supposing the Anglo-French Agreement had been carried out in the way that France anticipated at the time of its signature. I cannot but think that if a similar treaty had been drawn up between—let us say—France and Spain, England would have been the first to protest against the treaty being accepted as valid, unless there was some more potent protection for British interests in Morocco

than that provided by a declaration on the part of France that she intended for the present to administer Morocco under a French Protectorate on the principle of the "Open Door."

Under these circumstances it seems to me obvious that the failure of the French Government to communicate the Anglo-French Agreement officially to Germany must have been intentional and not accidental. The only explanation I can find for the otherwise unintelligible omission to acquaint Germany officially with the terms of the agreement is that, in the opinion of M. Delcassé and his colleagues, Germany, on learning that the Anglo-French understanding on the subject of Morocco was an accomplished fact, would not think it worth her while to dispute its validity, and that, therefore, France would weaken her own case by admitting the assumption that Germany had any right to be consulted or to express any opinion on the matter. Our own Government acted in accordance with British diplomatic usage in communicating the terms of our understanding with France in respect of Egypt directly to Berlin; and France would have occupied a far stronger position if she had



followed our example, and had not given Germany a plausible excuse for not communicating her intended dissent from the Anglo-French understanding in respect of Morocco till it suited the exigencies of German policy: I am not concerned in endeavouring to show that the intervention of Germany in the Morocco controversy was wise or unwise. All I contend is that Germany—in common for that matter with every great European Power—had an indisputable right to object to the Anglo-French Agreement as calculated to affect German interests in Morocco. In respect of Egypt she felt confident that German interests would not suffer under British administration, and she forthwith expressed her approval. In respect of Morocco she felt confident that German interests would suffer under French administration, and refused to give her approval to the Anglo-French understanding until it had been submitted to an International Conference.

If it had not been for accidental circumstances, I cannot but think the justice of the German contention would have commended itself to the common sense of the British public. There is no country in Europe which has so strong a

personal interest as England in maintaining the general principle that no two Powers can come to a valid agreement as to the annexation or partition or occupation of a hitherto independent State without the approval of other Powers whose interests are likely to be affected by the proposed change of administration. Unfortunately, popular opinion in England, and still more in France, attached an importance to the Anglo-French Agreement to which it had no intrinsic claim. In itself the Anglo-French Agreement was welcome to Great Britain. The recognition of our supremacy in Egypt and the settlement of the Newfoundland difficulty by the withdrawal on the part of France of claims dating from the Treaty of Utrecht were substantial advantages to the British Empire; and the restoration of friendly relations with France, as our nearest neighbour and for many long years our most formidable enemy, was genuinely felt by the British public as matter for personal satisfaction.

What happened to Morocco was to us a matter of comparative indifference; and at the outset the protest raised by Germany against the arrangements contemplated under a secret

treaty was popularly regarded in England as being dictated by German ill-will towards England and by German jealousy of our *entente cordiale* with the French nation. To put the matter plainly, the opposition to the Anglo-French Treaty, first made public on the occasion of the German Emperor's visit to Tangiers, was regarded by the British public as an unjustifiable attempt on the part of Germany to put a spoke in the wheel of an arrangement which gave general satisfaction to England as well as to France, and which ought to give satisfaction to Morocco if she understood her true interests. There was, too, a genuine, though irrational, British sentiment that we did not like to see France bullied, and that we were honourably bound to support our ally by the moral force of British public opinion. The result of this state of popular feeling, almost unintelligible to anyone not born and bred in England, was to give rise to an outburst of enthusiastic sympathy for France, which could hardly fail to be interpreted in Germany as an expression of ill-will towards the German nation, and as an intimation that, in the event of her persisting in her protest against the Anglo-French Agreement, England

would in the end side with France as against Germany.

As soon, however, as it became manifest that on the one hand Germany was in earnest, and on the other that England had no intention of going to war in order to uphold the Anglo-French Convention as binding upon Europe, France had no option save to accept the German demand for an International Conference, and thereby to abandon the fundamental principle on which the Anglo-French Agreement was based, that is, the right of France and England to settle between themselves what was to be the future status of Morocco under a French Protectorate.

Naturally enough, the organs of the French Republic and their partisans in the English Press have not lost a single opportunity of affirming that France never proposed to administer Morocco on the same principles on which she has administered Algeria, Tunis, Madagascar, and every other French colony on the face of the globe. I do not dispute the sincerity with which eminent French statesmen have repudiated the idea that France seriously contemplated the Tunisification of Morocco. They

would still doubtless affirm that in Tunis they had respected all foreign rights, had safeguarded all foreign interests and had, subject to the exigencies of the French fiscal system, maintained the principle of the "Open Door." On the other hand, I fail to see how, even with the best will in the world, France could have practically carried out the policy of the "Open Door" in Morocco, while she maintained the policy of the closed door in Algeria, as the two States are not separated by any natural frontiers, but divided by a geographical line running for the most part through a sparsely inhabited desert.

Thus, when France had once accepted the German proposal to submit the Morocco question to a conference, she had virtually given up her contention that, given the approval of England, she was entitled to establish a protectorate over Morocco without the sanction of Europe as expressed by a congress. Thus, Germany practically established the point she had contended for, namely, that France was not at liberty on the strength of the Anglo-French Agreement to add Morocco to her colonial possessions.

It seems to me incredible that the French Government should not have realised that to



submit the settlement of the Morocco controversy to an International Congress was tantamount to the abandonment of her intention to constitute herself the paramount power in Morocco. It is, however, intelligible enough that the French Government should have been unwilling to acknowledge this fact openly.

All countries are apt to magnify their own importance, and France is no exception to this rule. Our own estimate of England's greatness, strength, and loyalty is probably as high as that of France : but we do not labour under the delusion, so universal with our neighbours, that all nations in the civilised world entertain a respect and admiration for France, only second, if at all, to that that they entertain for their own country. This delusion is intensified by the utter indifference of Frenchmen to foreign politics, and their extreme ignorance of foreign countries. Paris is in French opinion the *ville lumière* not only of France, but of the globe ; and it is to her, as the personification of France, that all other nations, consciously or unconsciously, look for "light and leading."

Acting on the belief that the sympathies of Europe and America were on their side, and

that all the great Powers would be anxious to uphold the prestige of *la grande nation*, they took it for granted that an International Congress would decide in favour of the French—as opposed to the German—solution of the Morocco question. Moreover, it may have been genuinely imagined at the Quai d'Orsay that the action of France in accepting the reference of the matter in dispute to a Congress would be recognised by the neutral powers as entitling her to their own gratitude, and that, therefore, she might count on their supporting her claim at Algeciras by such a majority as would render it impossible for Germany to resist the decision of an International Congress. The plain truth is that the French Government overlooked the fact that the only serious interest the neutral Powers had, or have, in Morocco was to avoid the possibility of peace being endangered in Europe by the controversy between France and Germany, and that this result could only be achieved by satisfying the demand of Germany that France should not be given “the free hand” in Morocco which would have been secured to her by the Anglo-French Convention. Thus, as the dominant desire of every neutral Power is the preservation of the peace of Europe,

and as every Power bases her policy on considerations of her own personal interests, the idea that Europe would support the pretensions of France on account of their equity, whether real or imaginary, was manifestly chimerical.

The only concession made to France has been the acknowledgment of her right as a European Power, whose territory is contiguous to that of Morocco, to take any military measures required to protect her own territory against raids on the part of Morocco. I can quite understand the contention that the annexation of Morocco by France would be the best arrangement, if not for Morocco itself, for the interests of the European residents and traders in the Moorish kingdom. But, even if this is so, Germany had a perfect right to contend, on her side, that the annexation of Morocco, which would of necessity involve the extension of French territory from Tripoli to the Atlantic, was not consistent with the political and industrial interests of Germany or of Europe. The policies, therefore, of France and Germany in respect of Morocco were absolutely incompatible with, and even antagonistic to, one another.

I have no wish to deny that moral force has a certain weight of its own in all international controversies, but it is—and always will be while human nature remains what it is—of very limited weight unless it has physical force at its back. At the risk of repeating a definition of the difference between physical and moral force which I have used more than once, I should say that, in the former, the bayonets are in the front, but that in the latter they are in the rear. Without bayonets behind or before moral force cannot be said to exist. If this definition is correct it is obvious that the only real force of the Algeciras Conference resided in two of its members, that is in Germany or France. England under the wise guidance of our late Foreign Minister, if not at the instance of His Majesty—who has shown remarkable tact and common sense in carrying through an understanding which has been welcomed alike on both sides of the Channel—took the utmost care to define beforehand our obligations under the agreement in question. We bound ourselves to give France a free hand in Morocco in as far as we were concerned, and to give our diplomatic support to any measures France might propose to take for its

re-organisation. But I am convinced that no one of the late Ministry, or no statesman of the slightest political authority, ever contemplated seriously the possibility of our going to war for the sake of assisting France in adding Morocco to the dominions of the Republic.

We had no interest in the fortunes of Morocco which could conceivably justify our military intervention in that unfortunate and inaccessible country. Whether the Sultan or the Pretender reigned at Fez was to us a matter of indifference. Moreover, it was obvious to the meanest comprehension that for England to assist France by armed force might easily bring about complications between England and Germany. The very possibility of such a conflict was viewed with hostility by the British public, not only from the absence of any justification for such a policy, but because it might eventuate in a breach of friendly relations with the one country which, in virtue of its race, its institutions, religion, its national character and its history, is more akin to us than to any other Continental nation. If this was true in the days when our effusive demonstrations of goodwill towards France were at their height, it is still more true



to-day, when political power has passed into the hands of a party pledged to domestic reforms which could only be carried out under a pacific foreign policy incompatible not only with wars but with rumours of war. England therefore could not be counted upon by France for anything beyond diplomatic support.

The Conference met in the middle of February, and spent the first month of its existence in non-official conversation between its members, and in dealing with collateral subjects which had no bearing upon the main points at issue, namely, the formation of a State bank and the organisation of a police force to maintain order in Morocco, and to enforce the reforms which the Conference should determine to introduce. These two points owed their importance to their involving the issue whether France was or was not to have a free hand in Morocco, as contemplated by the Anglo-French Convention. The earlier work of the Congress has been aptly described as "marking time," that is, discussing subsidiary subjects which carried their task no forwarder, but furnished a decent excuse for prolonging their deliberations. It should, however, be owned that this "marking time" policy

brought to light five important conclusions. The first was that England had no intention of going beyond the terms of her compact with France by interpreting diplomatic support as a preliminary step towards an active intervention which might affect her friendly relations with Germany. The second was that no one of the neutral Powers would take action calculated to endanger, however remotely, the maintenance of European peace. The third was that, in the event of any question being brought before the Conference affecting the issue whether Morocco should be placed under exclusively French control, as proposed by France, or under some form of international control, as proposed by Germany, there was no likelihood of France commanding any substantial majority of the neutral Powers. The fourth was that France had definitely abandoned any idea of running the risk of a war with Germany single-handed in order to carry out her ambition of securing a supremacy in Morocco similar to that secured by England in Egypt. The fifth and last was that Germany would sooner withdraw from the Conference than accept any compromise under which Morocco would become a French dependency.

Given these conclusions, there could be no possible doubt as to the ultimate outcome of the Conference. It remained with Germany to determine whether the Conference should end in smoke, or whether its members should accept some arrangement by which the administration of Morocco should be conducted under international control. It is not my object to discuss in this article whether the attitude of Germany in this affair is likely to prove more conducive to her own interests or to those of Europe and Morocco than the adoption of the "free hand" for France, proposed under the Anglo-French Agreement.

At the first sight it may seem as if the decision of the Conference of Algeciras had no special bearing upon Egypt and her relations with England. But the fact remains that the Conference, at the instance of Germany, accepted the principle that no private understanding between two European Powers in respect of a State in which other Powers had commercial or political interests could be regarded as binding upon third parties, until it had been previously submitted to, and approved by, an International Conference. What is sauce for the goose is

sauce for the gander, and it follows logically that if an arrangement about Morocco concluded between France and England is null and void without the approval of an International Conference, an arrangement between the same Powers as to Egypt cannot be accepted as valid except under similar conditions. Now the British Government had the good sense to communicate the Anglo-French agreement as soon as it was concluded, and thereupon was informed officially from Berlin that the German Government saw no objection to the free hand accorded thereby to England in Egypt in as far as Germany was concerned. After the Conference was concluded, Germany declared to England that she saw no cause to object to our having the free hand in Egypt accorded to us, however irregularly, by the Anglo-French Agreement, as German subjects and German interests had every cause to be satisfied with the treatment they had received in Egypt under British administration. This second declaration was coupled with an intimation that if any fundamental change were effected in the relations between Egypt and Germany, the latter Power did not intend to commit

herself beforehand to similar acquiescence under altered conditions. Before the Conference was ended, it was an open secret that the British authorities in Egypt under their interpretation of the Anglo-French Agreement proposed to abolish the capitulations: to cancel the jurisdiction of the International Courts: to appoint a consultative legislature, which, in practice if not in theory, could only legislate in obedience to British instructions, or in accordance with British ideas; and to insist upon all communications between the Khedivial Government and Foreign Powers being conducted through the British Agency, instead of being conducted as at present through the Consuls-General accredited to the Viceregal Court. Any such changes, whether beneficial or hurtful in themselves, would modify most seriously the status of foreigners residing in Egypt: and if ever any changes of such a character should be proposed, not as a pious aspiration but as a practical policy, England may have to face the active opposition of Germany. This contingency is one whose occurrence is a possibility if not a probability.



To sum up, the attitude of the leading Continental Powers in regard to the British occupation of Egypt may be best described as one of unbenevolent neutrality. They dispute the British title to establish a Protectorate over Egypt: they disapprove on grounds of equity and good faith of the manner in which we have established our title: but they have no wish to oust us at their own cost and risk from the virtual Protectorate we have acquired, and under which we have raised Egypt to a state of marvellous material prosperity, and have, to say the least, inflicted as yet no injury on the subjects of any Continental Power which has commercial interests in the land watered by the Nile. So long as Germany's relations with England remain such as they are at present, we can do pretty well what we please in Egypt. But if the *entente cordiale* should ever give serious umbrage to Germany, she has it in her power to assert that, in virtue of the unanimous decision of the Algeciras Conference, the free hand given to England in respect of Egypt is null and void in common with that given to France in respect of Morocco. But, so far,

I hope that England will let sleeping dogs lie : and if so, she need fear no serious external attack upon her Egyptian Protectorate, though her position would be far less assailable if it were once openly declared.

## CHAPTER V

### MILITANT ISLAM

THERE is a well known saying attributed to many men of note, but I believe myself that it was probably first uttered by Dr. Abernethy. On some occasion he was asked by a lady sitting next him, "Doctor, what is your religion?" "Madam," he replied, "that of all sensible men." Upon the lady pressing him for further information as to "what that religion really was," the doctor retorted "that, my dear Madam, is a question no sensible man ever answers." The reason I quote this not very novel anecdote is that Egypt is one of the few countries in which the half-truth implied by the doctor's words would not appeal to any large class of the community.

I am most anxious to avoid wounding anyone's religious susceptibilities, but I feel that religious belief in Allah and his prophet

Mahomet holds so important and so exceptional a place in the life of the Egyptian people that to omit all reference to it would be to ignore one of the dominant factors of the Egyptian question. Here, the gulf which separates the educated from the unlettered classes is far wider than in most European countries. The former have been from their earliest years in touch with Europeans, and have assimilated many of their ideas, while the bulk of the population has been but little influenced by Western civilisation, and it is by the bulk of the nation, not by the cultured few, that the character of Egypt's faith and its tendencies must be fairly estimated.

In calling attention as I have done to the recrudescence of fanaticism, I am aware that I am touching on controversial ground, and that many educated Egyptians who have kindly communicated their ideas all assure me fanaticism is not a characteristic of their fellow-countrymen and their co-religionists. I have also received assurances in this respect from European residents here to whose opinion I attach high value.

I am sure that my friends, native as well as

foreign, had no intention of misleading, but I doubt whether they understand the word fanatic in quite the same sense as we use it in England. I am speaking of the Egyptians as a whole and not of the small cultured class which is frequently taken, I think erroneously, as representative of the native.

Superstitions of the grossest kind are well nigh universal amidst the Egyptian masses, as evinced by the wearing of charms and amulets, and their blind faith in quacks and soothsayers. It is but a short step from superstition to fanaticism. The one strong sentiment of the fellaheen is their belief in Islam, and if any impression should, with or without just cause, get hold of the native mind that Islam is in danger, superstition is always liable, in a Mahometan country, to develop into fanaticism.

The population of Egypt is commonly estimated at some twelve millions, of whom ninety per cent. are followers of Islam, the remaining one-tenth consisting of Copts belonging to the Greek Church, Armenian Christians, Jews, Italians, who as a rule adhere to the Roman Cathólic Church, Greeks, whose creed is that of the orthodox Eastern rite, and Levantines, who



belong in fairly equal proportions to the various creeds of Christendom. This being so, Egypt is, to all intents and purposes, a Mussulman country, whose people are worshippers of Allah, followers of the Prophet, and believers in the Koran.

Is there any real prospect of Islam ever becoming again a militant religion? This is the question which is perplexing the minds of all Europeans residing in Oriental countries, and more especially in Northern Africa. I should like, if possible, to throw some little light upon this vexed question. I am keenly alive to the truth of a favourite saying of my old friend Nubar Pasha, that the longer one studied the East, the more one realised how little one understood the Eastern point of view as seen through European spectacles. It has been my fortune to have been in intimate acquaintance with five well-known men who had lived their lives chiefly in Eastern countries, who were familiar with Eastern languages, and especially with Arabic, and who were singularly free from any bias, one way or the other, in the never-ending controversy between the Crescent and the Cross. Their names were Sir Richard Burton, Sir

Samuel Baker, Giffard Palgrave, Lawrence Oliphant, and Lionel Moore, all of whom have long since joined the majority. Differing widely in character and disposition, they had this in common, that they were learned in the language of the Koran, and that they had a genuine sympathy for the followers of the Prophet. Yet from one and all, I could never get any satisfactory explanation of the fundamental difference between Islam and Christendom, except that the East was the East and the West was the West.

My personal knowledge of countries in which Islam is the dominant creed is for the most part confined to Egypt, a country whose position is entirely different in many important respects from that of any other Mahometan States in Asia and Africa ; still it seems to me that Egypt affords a curious illustration of both the strength and the weakness of Islam as a militant religion. Theological controversies of any kind are matters with which I am incompetent to deal, though I own candidly that I am unable to understand why any man born and bred in Christendom should elect to change his creed for one, to say the least, expounding a less lofty ideal.

At the same time, a man must be very prejudiced who fails to understand why Mahometanism has so strong a hold upon its followers. It has in reality but two articles of faith. The first is that there is one God and one God only, and the second is that Mahomet was the chosen prophet of Allah, the all-wise, all-just, and all-powerful Deity by whom all things were made. The Koran is rather a system of laws regulating the conduct of true believers than a confession of faith. In many respects Islam is almost identical with Judaism, except that it is founded on a broader basis than that of race or caste or colour. Every man of any nationality or language is free to become a follower of Islam if he renounces idolatry and acknowledges that there is one God, whose prophet was the inspired author of God's word. Indeed, the bottom fact of Islam is the duty incumbent on all Mahometans to convert the world to the worship of one God and to exterminate the idolaters who refuse to be converted, though, to quote a passage of the Koran, an exception was to be made "in favour of the Jews and of all who believe in a day of judgment."

Happily for humanity there has never yet been any creed which has carried out its tenets to their extreme logical result, and Islam soon saw cause to modify the rigid execution of its sacred mission. During the early years when the followers of the Prophet spread over the Eastern world, conquering and to conquer, they carried out their mandate to the letter. Gradually, however, as their first ardour died away, they realised that the wholesale extermination of idolaters was a task beyond their power, and contented themselves with accepting tribute from unbelievers as an adequate proof of their subjection to the authority of Islam. But though they failed to carry out the policy of exterminating the infidel to the letter, they always adhered to the principle that this policy was one imposed upon them by the sacred law, even if its full execution might not be possible for the present. Contact with Christendom has abated, to some extent, the animosity between the Cross and the Crescent. Yet, through all the centuries that have come and gone since the death of Mahomet, his followers have never wavered in their conviction that some day a Messiah or Mahdi would make his appearance

upon earth who would lead the followers of the Prophet to victory and enable them to fulfil their appointed task, the forcible conversion of the heathen world to the worship of Allah, the one supreme ruler of the universe.

The causes which have maintained Islam unchanged and unchangeable cannot be discussed here with advantage. All I desire to point out is that the duty of making war upon the infidel is still the cardinal tenet of Islam. It may be no more than a pious aspiration, but it is one which has influenced the daily life of every generation of Mahometans, and which influences the generation of to-day. Every few years or so a Mahdi makes his appearance in some part of the Mahometan world. He is always a holy man, a doctor learned in the law, an erudite scholar according to the Mahometan standard of scholarship, an evangelist who has acquired the veneration of his fellow-believers by the sanctity and self-abnegation of his private life, and who has vindicated his claim to holiness by the fervour and frequency of his prayers, by his self-imposed penances, and by his sacrifice of all creature comforts and carnal pleasures. When he has won the con-



fidence of his neighbours his evangel is always the same.

He announces that he has been deputed from on high to warn his hearers that the decline of the Crescent as compared with the Cross is due to the followers of the Prophet not adhering to the laws of Islam. He invariably exhorts his hearers to renounce smoking, intoxicating liquors, and association with infidels. As his influence grows, he denounces the evil lives led by their rulers and protests against the wickedness of paying taxes to a government in which the leading posts are held by Christians or men of no religion, and bids them remember that the only guidance they should follow is that of men inspired, such as himself, whose one desire is to see the true faith of Islam practised by high and low. Sooner or later words lead to actions. The tax-collectors or the officials of the government are assaulted in the village where a Mahdi reigns supreme. The government is obliged to interfere. The Mahdi is either banished, imprisoned, or murdered ; a number of his adherents are shot down by the soldiery, and order is once more re-established. When a certain interval has elapsed, another Mahdi comes

forward, preaches the same doctrine, suffers the same fate, and so on *da capo*.

This fanatical fermentation is always going on throughout Islam, but does not assume serious proportions unless it is stimulated by a holy man of exceptional ability and believed—with or without reason—to be of genuine piety. Such a man was Sheik Mahomed Ahmed of Dongola, the Mahdi of the Soudan. The memories of European residents and officials in Egypt are so short that I suspect few of them are aware how near the Mahdi came to being placed in a position enabling him to carry out his policy of marching upon Cairo and driving all Christians out of Egypt. He failed owing to the military occupation of the country by British troops. The Egyptian regiments, if not accompanied by British troops, would have refused to fight against the Dervishes, or more probably would have deserted to the enemy, while the Mahdi himself would have been welcomed as a deliverer by the Mahometan population of the Khedivial kingdom.

This assertion may be disputed, but not, I think, by any one who knew Egypt during the time when the Anglo-Egyptian armies were

defeated by Osman Digma. Only the other day, when the Turks were reported to be massing troops in the Sinai Peninsula with the view of endangering the Suez Canal, popular sentiment in Egypt was enlisted on the side of the Sultan. In the face of our past experience, I feel considerable hesitation in accepting the official view entertained, or at any rate professed in Cairo, that the native Mussulman population are so gratified by the immense material improvements introduced into Egypt under British administration, that they would rally to our support in case of that administration being attacked either from within or from without.

Within the last two years a feeling of unrest has manifested itself in every part of the Mahometan world, and especially in Africa. Why this should be so is very difficult to explain. My own explanation is after all a mere conjecture, which I give for what it is worth. Amongst Mahometans there is, by virtue of their faith, a tendency to fatalism. The word *Kismet* explains the Oriental point of view with regard to all the incidents of human existence. Up till a very recent period, in all conflicts between natives and Europeans,

experience had shown that the former were certain to be defeated in the end. The only cause that could account for this invariable series of defeats was that for some inscrutable reason it was the will of Allah that unbelievers should gain the upper hand for the time being. To the Moslem mind this explanation is amply sufficient. If Allah did not intend that the faithful should triumph over the faithless, there was no more to be said, no motive for embarking in any conflict where defeat was a practical certainty. This reluctance on the part of the Moslem to engage in futile attempts to overthrow the military supremacy of the European administrations in Africa told strongly in favour of order throughout the Dark Continent.

Suddenly and unexpectedly, the conviction that native forces, however brave, were bound to be worsted by Europeans was shaken to its base by the discovery that Russia, which was regarded in the East as the greatest military Power in Europe, had been driven from pillar to post by the victorious Japanese, that her armies had been put to flight, her navy destroyed, her fortresses captured by a comparatively diminutive and feeble Power, whose people, whatever else

they might be, were certainly not Caucasians or Christians. It may be said with truth, that the native Africans, whether they were Mahometans or Christians or heathens, knew nothing, and, if possible, cared less, about Japan. But yet I should doubt whether there was a town or village in the whole of Africa where the inhabitants did not learn directly or indirectly that the Russian invaders of the Far East had been scattered like sheep by an unknown non-European race. In the Mussulman communities there was sure to be some Mahdi or student of the Koran ready to point the moral of this reversal of all previous experience, and to instil the belief that what the Japanese had accomplished against Russia might be achieved against the English in Egypt, against the Spaniards in Morocco, or against the French in Tunis or Algeria, by native forces trained and disciplined, as in Japan, by native officers.

In all human probability the magnitude of the Japanese victories was grossly exaggerated by popular rumours, while the causes which differentiate Japan from all other Oriental countries were kept deliberately in the background. But, granted all this, it still remains



certain that the tidings of the wholesale rout sustained by Russia inspired a conviction throughout the length and breadth of Mahometan Africa that the tide had turned at last, and that the time was at hand when Islam might resume her career of conquest and might fulfil her mission of exterminating all unbelievers, no matter what creed they may profess. The strength of this hypothesis is, I think, confirmed by the known facts of the recent fermentation of Africa. It is significant that almost every one of the recent uprisings against European rule in Africa has occurred since the news of the Russian *débâcle* had, or could have, reached Africa. Disturbances have arisen in Egypt, in the Soudan, in Somaliland, in German East Africa, in Uganda, in Natal, in the Congo Free State, in the French Congo, in the Gold Coast, in Northern Nigeria, in Zululand, in German West Africa, in Ashanti, and in Timbuctoo. But the chief risings have taken place in the territories occupied by Moslem populations, and especially in those under European Protectorates or under European spheres of influence.

Strange as it may seem to us, the great and manifest benefits conferred upon the natives

by European administrators are least appreciated in the Moslem communities which approach most closely to Western civilisation and which are under British rule. The reason of this is obvious enough to any one acquainted with the East. There, the sense of patriotism or even of nationality is wanting. The fact of being born and bred in one and the same country constitutes no bond of union between the inhabitants of an Eastern land. The one binding link in the East between races, as well as between individuals, is that of belonging to a common faith and observing the same religious rites and practices. No Mussulman in Egypt regards Kopts, or Armenians, or Greeks, as fellow-countrymen because they happen to be born in Egypt. In like fashion, in as far as I could ever learn, our tenure of India is mainly due to the fact that neither Hindoos nor Mussulmans, with the exception of a few Baboos, believe in an Indian nationality. But though the Oriental, whether in India, Asia, or Africa, is unable to realise even the idea of an international brotherhood between men of different creeds, he realises, far more fully than a citizen of Europe, the brotherhood appertaining to a

common creed. Nowhere is this latter brotherhood so firmly realised or observed so loyally as between Mahometans. A Moor or a Malay, a Soudanese, a Tunisian, or an Algerian, are to all intents and purposes more fully brethren than a couple of fellaheen who live and work side by side in the same village, supposing one to be a Moslem and the other a Copt.

You may say this state of mind is unnatural and illogical until you can realise the fact that patriotism is a word without meaning in the East, while community in faith is a bond whose force no European, except possibly in Slav communities, can really understand. Even in the present year of grace, an era which we are assured day by day is one of the highest culture and greatest enlightenment, any ignorant Mahdi who preaches a Jihad, that is a holy war for the extermination of infidels, is certain to secure the sympathy, if not the active support, of his fellow Mussulmans. This fact may be unpleasant, but it is a fact on which our future policy in the East must be based.

I might take credit to myself for having called attention for many long months to the general unrest amidst the Mussulman population

of Egypt. All the credit, however, I can honestly claim is that of having looked at facts as I saw them with my own eyes and not through official glasses. I have always done full justice to the great material improvements which have been introduced into the conditions of native life in Egypt under our British administration. I have, indeed, expressed an opinion that if our system of administration had been indirect instead of direct, we should have rendered our reforms less distasteful to native sentiment. Whether I am right or wrong can only be proved whenever—if ever—the experiment should be tried of substituting the policy recommended by the late Lord Dufferin for that which has hitherto found favour with the British Agency in Cairo.

Up to the other day it was an article of faith with the British authorities that the natives of Egypt, irrespective of their religious creed, were so satisfied with the reign of law and order we have introduced into Egypt, and with the abolition of the abuses prevailing previous to our military occupation, that they would resist any attempt to subvert our Protectorate. My assertion that, as a matter of fact, this con-

tention was unsound, and that the Moslem cared more about Islam than he did about crops and irrigation works, was denounced as inconsistent with the information forwarded by British officials from every part of Egypt, as to the general contentment of the natives under our enlightened rule. When I ventured to repeat the truth I have so often expressed, that Egypt owes its present prosperity to the presence of the British army on Egyptian soil, I was told that I overlooked the extraordinary effect produced on native opinion by the justice of our sway and by the success of our administrative policy. I ventured to foretell that the mere rumour of Turkish intervention would unite the whole Egyptian nation into partisans of the Sultan. I need not say that the views I then expressed have been shown to be substantially correct, while those of my critics have been proved to be utterly erroneous. I am convinced that our British officials honestly believed in the loyalty and gratitude of the fellaheen, but I utterly fail to understand how their delusions on the subject in question are compatible with any real study and understanding of the native mind or of the extraordinary influ-



ence of Islam as a political factor in Moslem countries.

Time after time during the last few months events have occurred which ought to have opened the eyes of our officials to the true state of things. The riot of Alexandria, the attempt to blow up the arsenal of Khartoum, the raid by Soudanese who had served under the Khalifa upon a village occupied by Anglo-Egyptian soldiers, a raid which was only possible on the hypothesis that the sympathies of the Soudanese villagers were with the insurgents, not with the Anglo-Egyptian soldiery; the sudden occupation of Akaba by Turkish troops, the revival of the Sultan's shadowy Suzerainty over Egypt, were all signs pointing to a general discontent amidst the Mussulman population, a discontent which was partly due to dissatisfaction with unwelcome and unpopular reforms, but, still more so to the sympathy of creed which causes all Egyptian followers of the Prophet to regard Abdul Hamid with veneration as being the head of Islam. When it was made manifest that in the event of a collision between Turkish and Egyptian troops the latter would refuse to fight against the former, and that their refusal would

enlist the sympathies of the whole Moslem community, the British authorities in Egypt awoke to the fact that they had been living in a fool's paradise.

This much I am bound to say in the interest alike of England in the first place, and of Egypt in the second. If anyone will search through Lord Cromer's voluminous and interesting report for 1905, published at the end of April, 1906, he will fail to find any allusion to the state of unrest which had already manifested itself in the valley of the Nile. The only allusion to the discontent, which had first made itself manifest in 1904, is contained in the concluding sentence of this report: "During the past year the whole machine of Government worked very smoothly. It will be seen from the report which I now submit, that improvements in various directions have been effected. There is every reason to believe that this steady and uniform rate of progress will be maintained in future years, but nowhere must there be undue haste." In order to show his belief in a steady and uniform rate of progress, his Lordship had recommended, in the previous pages of this report, the abolition of the Capitulations, the impending dissolution

of the Mixed Tribunals, the termination of the Caisse de la Dette, and the creation of a consultative parliament for Egypt, whose members were to be partly nominated and partly elected, who were to consist exclusively of local notabilities under conditions necessarily rendering the members completely subservient to the Egyptian Government, which in its turn is equally subservient, as long as the army of occupation remains in Egypt, to the representative of Great Britain at the Khedivial Court. Opinions may differ as to the merits or demerits of these proposals, but there can be no doubt as to the fact that if they should be carried into effect they would render the authority of their originator more absolutely autocratic than it is at present.

Up to the date of the Denshawai outrage our British officials still cherished the delusion that there was no serious unrest in Egypt, and that the reinforcement of the Army of Occupation was solely due to the hostile attitude of Turkey on the frontiers of the Sinai Peninsula. It was still taken for granted that the resolution of England—to uphold the independence of Egypt by force of arms against any aggression on the part of the

Sultan—must be welcome to the people of Egypt, who were supposed to dread any reassertion of Turkish authority, and to resent the revival of the pretension that Egypt, in fact as well as in name, is a vassal province of the Ottoman Empire. These delusions were dispelled when it became evident that the Moslems, who form upwards of nine-tenths of the Egyptian population, still acknowledged the supreme authority of the Sultan, as the Commander of the Faithful, and cared far more for the interests of their faith than for the material advantages they had obtained, and could only hope to preserve, under our military occupation.

It is common justice to acknowledge that, as soon as Lord Cromer's eyes were opened to the fact that the optimistic views he had maintained so long and so persistently were no longer tenable, he acted with a promptitude, a courage, and firmness of purpose, for which he deserves the gratitude of all who have at heart the interests of England, and the well-being of Egypt. The severity displayed under British authority in stamping out the riot, of which Denshawai was the scene, was one whose necessity we may regret, but of which we have no

cause to be ashamed. I can appreciate the argument, however much I may dissent from it individually, that under existing conditions Egypt is not worth keeping by England. What I cannot understand is the logical position of men who profess to believe that the maintenance of our Protectorate over Egypt is a matter of vital interest to the British Empire, and who yet object to the employment of the only means by which our supremacy can be upheld.

To speak the plain truth, any outrage upon British soldiers wearing the British uniform is an offence which must be punished sternly and promptly, whatever excuses may be suggested to mitigate the gravity of the crime. If a British soldier can be shown to have committed an unprovoked attack upon a native, he should be tried before a military court, and if the charge brought against him should be established to the satisfaction of this tribunal, he should be punished severely by the British military authorities. There is no probability, so long as the administration of Egypt remains in its present hands, of such sentence erring on the side of undue severity. It was owing to a well-founded conviction that an exceptional Court was re-



quired to judge charges brought against soldiers by natives, or against natives by soldiers, that the tribunal which tried and sentenced the Denshawai prisoners was established in 1895, when there were symptoms of serious excitement amidst the native population, and of grave hostility to British troops. It would have been far better if the Court had been composed solely of British officers, whose sentence should have been approved by the British Consul-General previous to its execution. But with our usual preference for phrases to facts it was decided that native judges, as well as British, should form part of the Court, under an erroneous belief that their presence in the tribunal would satisfy the natives that the trial would be fair and impartial. As, however, the natives entertain a not altogether baseless conviction that in the courts of law as well as in the public service, native officials will always be under the control of the British Agency, the presence of native judges was not regarded as any guarantee for their own protection. On the whole, however, this exceptional Court has fulfilled its exceptional purpose, and the idea that the natives or their families and friends objected to

any alleged legal irregularity in the constitution or the procedure or the code of the Court will not commend itself to any one who realises the fundamental differences between Eastern and Western conceptions of justice. The ringleaders in the Denshawai outrages were perfectly aware that if they were brought to trial their punishment, according to Eastern ethics, must be death, without hope of reprieve or respite. Justice must be short, sharp, and summary to impress the Oriental mind; and any delay in the infliction of the punishment or any mitigation of its severity would have been fatal to the purpose for which the penalty was inflicted. The fellaheen now understand that henceforth British soldiers belonging to the army of occupation cannot be attacked with impunity.

In comparison with Pan-Slavism, any peril to European civilisation arising from Pan-Islamism is utterly insignificant. Under a powerful rule, whether that of an autocratic Czar or even more of a democratic Socialist Republic, Russia might conceivably combine all the Slav States lying outside her frontiers into one great confederacy. No such combination of Mahometan States is possible under the leadership of a

disorganised and moribund empire such as that of Turkey in Europe. The utmost the Commander of the Faithful could effect by advocating a Pan-Islamic agitation directed against Christendom in Mahometan provinces would be to stir up isolated demonstrations against the powers that be, which in Egypt, at any rate, would be easily suppressed, so long as we have an adequate army in Egypt, and so long as any disturbance in any part of the Nile valley or of the Soudan is stamped out as promptly and as sternly as we suppressed the incipient riot at Denshawai. The warning conveyed by Sir Edward Grey as to the potential danger of allowing the fermentation of Islam in the East to continue unchecked was, there is reason to believe, impressed upon the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by our Consul-General in Egypt. The warning thus given is all the more impressive, owing to the fact that his Lordship has been for the last few years a firm partisan of a conciliatory policy towards the natives, and of studying their susceptibilities by keeping our troops almost out of sight and out of mind.

If I am right, therefore, in my views, our

present position can only become critical in Egypt if the Imperial Government, yielding to the pressure of the more advanced of their supporters, should undo the effect produced by the condign punishment of the Denshawai rioters, and thereby lead the fellaheen to imagine that England is only half-hearted in her determination to suppress any hostile demonstration against the British Protectorate. Anglo-officialdom in Egypt might, possibly with advantage, be kept more in the background ; but the British Army must be kept henceforth in the front. *Nemo me impune lacessit* must be the password of our administration in Egypt, civil as well as military.

It could never be forgotten that unrest in Egypt might at any moment be resuscitated by popular agitation in any of the other States of Africa in which Islam is the dominant creed, but whose government is European and Christian. If, to cite a hypothetical case, a native rising against French rule were to take place in Algeria, and a French army were to sustain such a defeat at the hands of native troops as our army suffered at Isandula, the news would be passed from mouth to mouth by native messengers, and

would be known throughout Africa long before it reached the ears of our officials. In the present state of unrest, such an occurrence would be regarded by the whole Mahometan population of North Africa as a sign that the followers of the Prophet were to take up arms and expel, if they could not exterminate, all infidels who, to their thinking, worship more gods than one, and who do not obey the commands of Allah as laid down in the Koran. It is, therefore, of vital importance to all Christian Powers who have possessions, spheres of influence, or Protectorates in the Dark Continent, that they should act together against any Jihad in any part of Africa, however far they may be distant from the immediate scene of a conflict between the Cross and the Crescent. There are only four great European Powers which directly or indirectly control the administration of native States where Islam is the religion of the bulk of the population. Those countries are England, France, Italy, and Germany.

It would be extremely difficult to form any sort of Pan-European League for the protection of Christian communities settled in Mahometan countries. It would, however, come to much the



same thing if all the European Powers who have personal interests in Africa could be brought to realise that a Mahometan rising in any one State is a danger, not to the individual State, but to all other States under similar conditions. It is therefore most desirable that there should be no cause of dissension between the various European nations who have interests of their own in Africa. England and France may, for the present, be relied upon to pursue a common policy. Whether Germany or Italy will follow their lead must depend mainly upon the attitude adopted towards them by England and France. The suspicion of Germany entertained by France is too ingrained to afford much hope that France will, of her own accord, approve of any policy calculated to remove the antagonism between Great Britain and the Fatherland, or to support the fulfilment of Italy's ambition to establish a Protectorate over Tripoli. England, however, is in a position to command the support of the French Republic in respect of Egypt and the Soudan. There can be no reasonable doubt that England has a strong personal interest in securing the cordial co-operation of Germany in her endeavour to hinder the recent revival of

Moslem fanaticism from assuming formidable proportions.

To the best of my belief, our own Government is fully aware how much we owe to the refusal of Germany to give any encouragement to the invasion of the Sinai Peninsula by Turkish troops. It is certain that if Germany had kept silence at Constantinople, the Sultan, relying on the supposed good-will of Germany and on the temporary effacement of Russia as a military power, would have pursued his aggressive policy towards Egypt, and would have compelled England to engage in a war with Turkey, and, by so doing, expose herself to the bitter hostility of Islam throughout Asia and Africa generally, and especially in Egypt.

## CHAPTER VI

### HOW EGYPT IS GOVERNED TO-DAY

ENGLAND and Egypt have few things in common beyond the two facts that they have both the same initial letter and that they both are governed under an unwritten constitution. Happily for any Egyptian Hallam, whose self-imposed task should be to record the birth and growth of constitutional government in the valley of the Nile, his researches will not necessitate his going back to any very remote period. During the earlier years of Ismail Pasha's reign the government of Egypt was, in fact as well as in theory, an absolute personal despotism. His will was law. His ministers were appointed at his pleasure, dismissed at his pleasure, and were regarded by him and by his people as clerks whose sole function and duty was to carry out their master's orders to his own satisfaction.

He was in the main an amiable, good-natured man, who liked people to like him, and who was devoid of the lust of cruelty not infrequent amidst despotic rulers in all parts of the world. Still, if anybody, high or low, great or small, famous or infamous, crossed Ismail's path or stood in Ismail's way he crushed the offender with merciless severity. Egypt was only an alias for Ismail. The Viceroy held the purse-strings of the State. He borrowed without the knowledge or consent of his people, he contracted loans without their sanction, he paid the proceeds into his own coffers, he allowed no inspection or supervision of his revenue, which was practically identical with the revenue exacted by taxation; he allowed no distinction to be made between his personal receipts and outgoings, and these he handled as supreme ruler of Egypt.

No doubt there were certain limitations to Ismail's uncontrolled omnipotence. His Suzerain the Sultan was nominally his overlord, and claimed an ill-defined authority over the vassal State. But the vassal was perfectly well aware that the Suzerain would never put his theories into practice so long as the former was able to

pay hush money to the latter. He had far too shrewd a knowledge of human nature, and above all of Oriental human nature, not to be aware of the latent fanaticism of the Orient, which the nations of Christendom seem unable to realise, not to recognise the peril of incurring the hostility of Islam : and though in private life he might denounce teachers of Islam as vulgar mischief-makers, who were always meddling in matters which did not concern them, he never committed any offence, beyond the comparatively minor sins of associating with infidels and drinking champagne, which would justify his being represented as not a believer in the Koran or a genuine follower of the Prophet. Thus his fear of arousing the dormant fanaticism of Egypt and directing it against himself did to some slight extent curb his autocracy. He never openly disputed the authority of the Moslem Courts. The Wakfs, which own considerable property devoted to religious charities or to instruction in the Koran, were almost the only owners of land in Egypt whose revenue he left comparatively untouched by increased taxation. A more important limitation to his unrestrained power was the growth of the European community



in Alexandria, which under the capitulations had achieved almost complete independence. It was a favourite saying of Nubar Pasha that the greatest boon for an Oriental population was to have a European community planted in their midst, because such a community in their own interests propagated ideas of European law and justice until the ideas so propagated filtered gradually into the Oriental mind. I believe this assertion was true generally. I am convinced it was true in the case of Alexandria and to a lesser extent of Port Said. These two sea-ports were in close communication with what I may call their respective mother countries, and Ismail was intelligent enough to understand that if he committed any gross outrage against the principles which regulate the code of European civilisation, these outrages would be reported to Europe and would damage the credit on which he depended for the further loans necessary to meet the payments of interest on his previous loans till such time as the vast undertakings on which he had embarked recklessly had become remunerative.

It would be absurd to attribute any credit to Ismail for having involved Egypt, whose public debt was only three millions at the time of his

accession to the Vice-regal throne, and had increased, after he had reigned ten years, to close upon a hundred millions. Yet as a matter of fact Egypt owes its present prosperity to the Franco-English bondholders who brought about European intervention in Egypt, not from any regard for the welfare of the Egyptians, but in order to secure the repayment of their advances which had been made to Ismail, and guaranteed by him through the hypothecation of the revenues of Egypt. Still if Ismail had not borrowed right and left in order to carry out his various schemes for the development and aggrandisement of Egypt, there would have been no commissions of enquiry, no law of liquidation, no escape except bankruptcy from the crushing burden of a gigantic debt. Moreover, if it had not been for the necessity of conciliating public opinion in Europe, Ismail would never have consented to the reforms which are still the main bulwarks of such qualified independence as Egypt enjoys to-day. My own impression is that Ismail never realised the full effects of the reforms he was persuaded to sanction on the advice of the one great statesman whom Egypt has produced since the days of Joseph. From

Ismail's personal point of view, the sole object of abolishing the jurisdiction of the Consular Courts in civil matters, and of placing in the International Courts the trial of all civil suits between foreigners of different nationalities, or between foreigners and natives, was to throw dust in the eyes of Europe and to lead the Powers to suppose that the International Courts would administer justice on European, not on Oriental principles. He found out his mistake when he discovered that the code of the International Courts, which he understood was, subject to certain local alterations, the counterpart of the Code Napoléon, and which he had signed, as he alleged, without perusing, contained a clause authorising the new International Courts to give judgment to any suit brought against the Government, and in the case of this judgment not being carried out to levy execution by the officials of the Courts on any land or property belonging to the State. His Highness assured my old friend, the late Horatio Lloyd, who came out to Egypt in 1876 to present a claim by the constructors of the Alexandria breakwater, that if he had understood the clause in question he would have cut off his

right hand sooner than sign the code, which may fairly be described as the Magna Charta of the Egypt of to-day. I am certain this statement was made to Mr. Lloyd, but I am by no means equally certain of its truth. In the course of his dealings with the Suez Canal Company, with the cosmopolitan capitalists who supplied him with the funds he required, and with the Levantine merchants who piled up his huge floating debt, he had long come to the conviction that he could always wriggle out of any financial difficulty either by coercion or corruption. Thus he may have easily imagined that the new judges of the International Courts would prove equally accessible to similar inducements. It was only when Messrs. Goschen and Joubert came out to Egypt as the representatives of bondholders and received the active support of their respective Consuls-General, that Ismail realised that both England and France, the only two Powers seriously interested in Egyptian affairs, were determined to insist upon some equitable agreement being made with the bondholders. It was then that, in his natural desire to avoid any explanation of the way in which he had appropriated the vast

sums he had borrowed from Europe, he hit upon an original conception of his own, that of converting the Government of Egypt from an Autocratic into a Constitutional Government. The Commission of Enquiry, which had been instituted in order to discover how far Egypt and Ismail were severally or jointly responsible to the bondholders for the loans floated on the markets of Paris and London, had hardly begun to examine how far the proceeds of these loans had been appropriated to State purposes, or employed by the Khedive for his personal expenditure, when the Commission of Enquiry was sent about its business on the plea that his Highness had determined to rule Egypt in future as a Constitutional Sovereign, acting in obedience to the advice of an International Ministry.

In accordance with this change of front, Nubar Pasha, an Armenian, and the only Egyptian statesman known by repute or even by name out of Egypt, was appointed Prime Minister. Mr. (now Sir) Charles Rivers Wilson, then Controller of the British National Debt, was made Minister of Finance, and M. de Blignières, a well-known French official, was created Minister



of Public Works. The International Ministry lasted for about three months. At its outset Ismail went about assuring everybody he met that "*Nous sommes plus en Afrique ; nous sommes en Europe,*" and declaring that he was now a Constitutional Sovereign with no will of his own, whose sole duty it was to give his Ministers the benefit of his advice and experience, and to carry out any policy they might dictate. The one measure carried out by the Anglo-Franco-Egyptian Administration was to nominate a sort of Parliament which was, if my memory serves me right, to be elected later on by manhood suffrage, and to whose approval all laws and decrees were to be submitted before they came legally into force. As soon as Ismail discovered that the Constitutional Ministry, instead of dropping the prosecution of the enquiry, as he had anticipated, was bent on pursuing its investigations to the bitter end, he announced that the farce of a sham constitution had been played too long, dismissed his Ministers and declared openly that he intended to re-establish absolute autocracy in obedience to the wishes of his people.

I think Ismail was not altogether wrong in

asserting that the International Ministry were unpopular with the mass of his subjects. They laboured under the fatal defects of being Christians and foreigners. As long as they were supposed to command the confidence of the Viceroy their authority was complete, but the moment an impression gained ground that the Khedive was dissatisfied with their services, their doom was sealed. When it became manifest that neither France nor England was prepared to take any active steps to uphold the International Ministry, Ismail came to the conclusion that his absolute autocracy was definitely recognised both at home and abroad. Acting on this belief, he refused to execute the judgments of the International Courts.

It is very difficult to speculate on what the course of events might have been if something had not happened which did happen. England and France, the two countries which had the strongest interests in Egypt, political as well as financial, were extremely averse to any joint intervention, and were equally determined not to allow any solitary intervention on the part of either of them. Matters were at a deadlock, when Germany suddenly appeared on the scene.

A despatch, whose authorship is commonly assigned to Prince Bismarck, was sent to Cairo from Berlin, informing the Khedivial Government that Germany, as one of the Powers which had acquiesced in the substitution of the International Courts for the Consular Courts, felt it her duty to insist upon the judgments of the latter tribunals being carried into execution. The despatch concluded with an intimation, couched in diplomatic phraseology, to the effect that if the judgments of the International Courts were not carried into immediate effect Germany would take such steps as might be sufficient to enforce compliance with her just demands. I have never been able to understand exactly what steps Germany intended to employ for this purpose. It is, however, giving the Great Chancellor credit for no exceptional sagacity if he realised that the threat would suffice to effect his purpose without any display of armed force. As soon as the German ultimatum was known, the Government of the French Republic came to the conclusion that any German intervention in Egyptian affairs must be averted at all costs and all hazards. The idea that the Sultan, as Suzerain of Egypt, should be induced to depose

the Viceroy on the ground of his culpable misrule of the vassal kingdom, an idea which had been originally proposed by England and rejected by France, was adopted in hot haste, and orders were sent from Constantinople to Cairo instructing Ismail Pasha to abdicate and to resign his title of Khedive. In accordance with a firman issued by the Sultan on Ismail's own request, the succession devolved upon Ismail's eldest son, not as heretofore on his eldest male relative. Thus, by the will of the Sultan, and with the consent of England and France, Ismail Pasha was deposed and exiled from Egypt, and his son Tewfik Pasha reigned in his stead. The deposition of Ismail was solicited as a favour, and therefore neither England nor France was in a position—even if they were so inclined—to insist upon any curtailment of the absolute authority conceded to the descendants of Mahomet Ali by their Suzerain. Thus, subject to the limitations to which I have already referred, Tewfik remained as absolute an autocrat as his father. The only difference lay in their personal characters. Ismail was a man of strong will, high ambitions, great native ability and utterly devoid of

scruples. Tewfik was a kindly, well-meaning man, a devout follower of the Prophet, and desirous above all things of a quiet life. If ever there was a world out of joint it was Egypt in 1878 to 1881, and by "cursed spite" the duty of "setting that world aright" fell on Tewfik's shoulders. Never was a sovereign placed by cruel fate in a more parlous plight. The Commission of Liquidation undertook to reorganise the finances of his country, to the advantage doubtless of Egypt, but still more obviously to that of the foreign bondholders. The two controllers, M. de Blignières and Mr. Morgan Auckland Colvin, were always pressing the Khedive to grant reforms which could only be carried out in times of tranquillity and prosperity. At this period, moreover, the Treasury was empty; the creditors were pressing for payment; and the army was on the eve of mutiny. In recalling the history of these days it is only fair to bear in mind that, whatever opinions may be held as to the merits or demerits of Arabi's ideas, it was "Achmed the Egyptian," and he alone, to whom the military occupation of Egypt by British troops—whether for good or evil—is due. I can say with absolute



confidence that the massacres at Alexandria and the insurrection raised against the authority of the reigning Viceroy by Arabi and his fellow conspirators left England absolutely no choice except to suppress the mutiny and replace Tewfik on the throne. The obligation incumbent upon the British Government was recognised, however reluctantly and however half-heartedly, by Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues. The British Fleet was despatched to Alexandria under the impression that France would co-operate with England in the restoration of order. At the eleventh hour, when instructions had been sent out to the British Admiral to bombard Alexandria, the French Fleet acting under orders from Paris quitted the harbour and sailed out to sea. There is a strong reason to suppose that it was M. Ferdinand de Lesseps who was the primary cause of France thus forfeiting her hold on Egypt. He had formed a most exaggerated estimate of Arabi and his influences in Egypt, and had in virtue of this estimate assured M. de Freycinet, then all powerful in France, that the bombardment would be of no avail, and that if England were to land an army in Egypt her troops would be held in check, if not defeated,

by the insurgents, and that in such a case France might step in and dictate terms of peace to the belligerents to her own profit and advantage. Be this as it may, England, after Tel-el-Kebir, the ignominious flight of "Achmed the Egyptian," and the unopposed entry of our troops into Cairo, was absolute mistress of the situation, and of her own authority replaced Tewfik Pasha upon the Vice-regal throne. What I wish to point out is that Tewfik's restoration was not accompanied by any attempt to modify his relations with the Sultan or to restrict the absolute autocracy which had attached to the hereditary Pashalik since the days of Mahomet Ali, the Lion of the Levant. Subject to our military occupation, Tewfik's will remained supreme throughout Egypt; and if he had been allowed to exercise his legal authority and punish the soldiers and officials who mutinied against his Government and conspired against his life, by the rough and ready punishment which is inflicted on such criminals in every Oriental country, he probably would have become powerful enough to dispense after a brief period with the presence of our troops.

Fortunately for the interests of the British

Empire, a misplaced sentimentalism on the part of the British public insisted upon Arabi and his associates being treated as patriots whose offences would be adequately met by exile in lieu of death. Tewfik Pasha was thereby condemned, sorely against his will, to look to the prolongation of our occupation as essential to the continuance of his reign, if not to that of his life. I was told during his lifetime by one of his Ministers that in the early days of our occupation some remark was made in the course of conversation about a recent review of the British garrison at which his Highness had been present. Thereupon the Viceroy suddenly turned to his interlocutor saying "Do you suppose I like all this? I tell you I never see an English sentinel in my streets without longing to jump out of my carriage and strangle him with my own hands." If this was the sentiment of so peaceable and kindly a man as Tewfik Pasha, it is easy to understand what was—and probably still is—the sentiment of the other descendants of Mahomet Ali, Princes of far stronger character and higher pride of race and creed. If once our Protectorate were openly avowed, the Khedive and the members of

the Khedivial family—in common with all Orientals—would accept an accomplished fact with its necessary consequences. But so long as there exists a possibility or even a probability of our troops being withdrawn, they cling to the hope of recovering their old rank and place and power. Nor can I for one as an Englishman consider their lack of appreciation of British rule as a conclusive sign of moral depravity.

It was during Tewfik's reign that Major Baring, then Sir Evelyn Baring, returned to Egypt after the occupation. Throughout his previous residence in Cairo as British Commissioner of the Caisse de la Dette he had played a comparatively unimportant part in Egyptian affairs, as he then did not possess the high financial reputation which pertained to his colleague, Rivers Wilson, as the British Minister of Finance in the short-lived Anglo-Franco-Egyptian Constitutional Ministry, and as the Controller of the National Debt of England. On his return, however, from India, where Major Baring had filled the office of Financial Minister with remarkable success, he was appointed British Consul-General in Egypt. From that date up to to-day he has held

a position in Egypt which no British Consul-General had ever held before or is ever likely to hold again. Even those who in common with myself entertain the opinion that the system of direct autocratic personal administration introduced into Egypt by Lord Cromer is not in harmony with the true interests of either England or Egypt, must at the same time admit that his policy of rendering Egypt solvent, no matter at what cost or at what retardment of reforms most urgently needed, has been in accordance with sound judgment and high statesmanship. His Lordship never wavered in his convictions that all internal reforms must be postponed till Egypt was placed in a position to pay the interest on her public debt out of her own resources. Great courage and perseverance were required to carry out an unpopular policy in the face of constant opposition; and Lord Cromer may fairly claim that the restoration of Egyptian credit is the basis of all the material amelioration he has introduced into Egypt. In order, however, to carry out his policy of retrenchment, our Consul-General had of necessity to enforce the collection of revenue and the diminution of expenditure in every department



of administration by English officials appointed nominally by the Khedive, but practically by himself, and dependent upon his good pleasures for their continuance in office. Thus he has gradually secured an absolute autocratic authority as great as that exercised by Mahomet Ali or by any Viceroy of Egypt down to the fall of Ismail Pasha, though exercised, as I must frankly admit, with higher motives and with a far greater sense of personal responsibility.

The sudden and unexpected death of Tewfik Pasha and the accession to the Vice-regal throne of Abbas—then almost a boy—tended incidentally to render Lord Cromer's predominance more powerful and more manifest than it had ever been before. Whatever Tewfik Pasha's private sentiments may have been towards the British occupation, he never placed himself in direct opposition to the policy of England as enunciated by her proconsul. Great excuse must reasonably be made for the reigning Viceroy if, having been raised to the throne while very young, having been chiefly educated abroad under influences not over friendly, to say the least, to the British occupation of Egypt, and being surrounded at his accession by French as

well as native advisers, who were constantly urging him to assert himself, he should have yielded to a not unnatural desire to show that he considered himself the master of his own army, whose officers, notwithstanding their British nationality, held office under his own commission, liable theoretically to be dismissed at his own pleasure. Possibly if Lord Kitchener had not been the General in Command of the Anglo-Egyptian Army, the criticism addressed by the Khedive to the manner in which active manœuvres had been executed by his own troops in his own presence, the criticism might not have been called for so complete an apology as the future conqueror of the Khalifa insisted upon as indispensable. The then Prime Minister, Riaz Pasha, represented to the youthful Viceroy that unless he withdrew the order of the day at which Kitchener had taken umbrage, his continuance on the throne might be rendered doubtful. The Khedive thereupon capitulated, but though the lesson may have been needed, it is only in human nature that it should have been bitterly resented by a young Prince who had never fully realised till then that he was not even master of his own army.

The above incident, if I am not mistaken, had much to do with Lord Cromer's determination to govern Egypt by English officials, who were appointed by him and who held office, in fact if not in name, in accordance with his own ideas and his own instructions. By this time his Lordship had, I think, come to two conclusions to which he had never committed himself previously. The first conclusion was that our military occupation was certain to be permanent. The second conclusion was that within the lifetime of his generation Egypt was never likely to adapt herself to any form of constitutional self-government. On the strength of these conclusions he formed the opinion that the best mode of establishing law and order in Egypt was to impregnate the country, in as far as possible, with English ideas of justice and administration, and that this was most likely to be effected by British officials acting under his own instructions and his own control.

The position occupied by our Consul-General up to 1888 was one of extreme difficulty. In the first place he had to recommend, or, more correctly speaking, to enforce upon the Khedive

and his Ministers a policy of rigid economy, a policy always unpopular in every country and above all in every Oriental country. To the native mind it seemed irrational to spend money in reducing the capital of the debts due to foreign bondholders, when the same money employed in irrigation would have materially increased the revenue of Egypt. The Home Government cared very little about what was done, or left undone in Egypt, so long as no action was taken by our representative at the Khedivial Court which might discredit their repeated assertions that our occupation was not intended to be permanent, and was to come to a termination as soon as Egypt had become fit to govern herself in accordance with British ideas of sound administration. The strangest of the many strange phases of Anglo-Egyptian history is that, while on the Continent and in Egypt these assertions were regarded as silly attempts to throw dust into the eyes of other nations, they were made in perfect good faith and honesty by the Government of Great Britain whether the Liberals or Conservatives were in power. Lord Beaconsfield may have contemplated the establishment of a British Protectorate over Egypt at

the period of the Cave mission, but if so, the opposition of his colleagues and of all the leading members of the Conservative party compelled him to abandon the idea. I can say from my own knowledge that Mr. Gladstone's hostility to any proposal for the permanent occupation of the Nile Valley was shared by Mr. Bright, Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Goschen, Lord Wolseley, and Lord Granville. Lord Cromer may, and probably did, perceive far sooner than our Ministers at home that England having once got into Egypt would find insuperable difficulties in getting out of Egypt, but in accordance with the instructions he received he was precluded from even intimating in Cairo that England was in favour of a prolonged occupation. It was not till after Egypt had been coerced into evacuating the Soudan, and the Dervishes threatened the invasion of the Nile Valley that England reluctantly came to the conclusion that the task we had undertaken of rendering Egypt capable of defending itself against external or internal attacks was an utter impossibility, and that, therefore, in order to protect our highway to India, we must render our occupation of Egypt permanent.



It is only justice to Lord Cromer to acknowledge that while British policy towards Egypt was based on a delusion, he would have found it extremely difficult to administer the country in co-operation with native officials. The only contingency under which, at the period I speak of, it would have been possible was the conclusion of a political association between Lord Cromer and the one statesman of Egypt, Nubar Pasha. From the commencement of the era when Egypt was on the verge of bankruptcy and when my intimate friendship with Nubar first commenced, he never disguised his conviction that Egypt must fall under the Protectorate of some European Power, and that the Power best qualified to exercise such a Protectorate with the least injury to Egyptian interests was England. Socially he preferred France to England; he spoke French to perfection, he had been educated in France, and his chief personal friends were Frenchmen. But though an Armenian by race and creed, he looked upon Egypt, where his family had resided since the days of Mahomet Ali, as his native land, and always studied what, rightly or wrongly, he believed to be her interests. Of all the many men of eminence, who either as statesmen,

diplomatists, travellers, or visitors came into personal relations with Nubar, I have never known one who was not impressed by his exceptional faculty of understanding the different points of view from which all questions political, personal, or religious present themselves to the Oriental and the Western mind. I think I could safely state that Lord Cromer would not dispute my estimate of Nubar Pasha's exceptional ability. I think, too, he would admit that they might have worked together to the joint advantage of England and Egypt if their respective characters and the positions in which they were severally placed by the force of circumstance could have admitted of any common action. If either Lord Lyons, Lord Dufferin, or Sir William White had occupied the post of Lord Cromer, I am inclined to believe they would have availed themselves gladly of Nubar Pasha's intimate knowledge of Oriental nature and of European foreign affairs, but between Lord Cromer and Nubar there was an incompatibility of character which was in itself fatal to any full appreciation of each other's sterling merits. There were faults, I have no doubt, on both sides. Both men cared more

for having their own way than for the show of power. I can recall an incident narrated to me at one of the earliest meetings of the Commission of Enquiry. At this meeting, Nubar delivered a very eloquent and detailed account of the reasons which had induced him to establish the so-called International Tribunals, to the effect that these Courts were absolutely independent of the Government and therefore could be relied upon to administer justice. He added that justice was the basis of all genuine reform and of all true civilisation. When Nubar had finished his speech, M. de Blignières, then Minister of Public Works, rose and said he could not allow this speech to pass in silence without shaking the hand of its author and thanking him for the services he had rendered not only to Egypt but to humanity by the noble sentiments he had expounded so ably. Upon M. de Blignières sitting down, Major Baring, as he was then, remarked "if talking was over they had better begin business." This anecdote, whether true or false, illustrates clearly the lack of mutual sympathy which, subsequent to our military occupation, characterised the relations between Lord Cromer and Nubar. The power-

ful imagination of the latter, his marvellous command of language, his love for great ideas and greater conceptions, his dislike of administrative details, his large views of expenditure and his sympathy with Oriental customs, usages and prejudices were all distasteful to his British colleague, whose strict regard for rigid economy, whose preference for British laws and British jurisprudence exercised by British Consuls and Judges, and whose stiffness of manner presented a barrier against any cordial co-operation between Nubar and our Consul-General. If such co-operation was impossible between men who, in their own way, were possessed of exceptional ability, it became still more impossible between our Consul-General and such native Ministers as Cherif, Riaz, and Fahn, who were all, notwithstanding their several merits, utterly incapable of grasping the fundamental principles of British rule in Egypt as propounded by Lord Cromer.

If I have made my meaning clear it is not difficult to comprehend how Lord Cromer came to the conclusion that it was impossible to administer Egypt in any other way than by British officials imbued with British principles.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE FUTURE OF EGYPT.

I HAVE, I hope, succeeded in showing that the Egypt of to-day is governed by an autocratic system whose fundamental principle is the same as that under which Egypt has been ruled for ages, namely, that the will of the Monarch is law. I fully admit that the application is very different. The Sovereign *de facto* is a high-minded British nobleman, who, so long as he retains the confidence of his own Government, can administer the affairs of Egypt in any way he deems most conducive to British interests. The Sovereign *de jure* is, in theory, an independent Prince, whose real function is to issue willingly or unwillingly the decrees he is instructed to sign by his Mayor of the Palace. I have endeavoured to show that this anomalous arrangement has been mainly brought about by a variety of causes



for which Lord Cromer is not responsible and which might very possibly have led any other Consul-General who had held the same post to pursue the same policy under the same conditions.

It is with great reluctance I say anything in depreciation of Lord Cromer's great merits as an administrator. But the interests of truth compel me to state that his remarkable individuality has biassed him almost unconsciously in favour of a system of autocratic rule administered by British officials appointed by himself and holding their offices subject, in fact though not in name, to his approval. A knowledge of Arabic is not considered an essential qualification for a representative of Great Britain in Egypt; and it must be owned that there is far less risk of orders being misunderstood or disregarded or performed with negligence, if these orders are given directly in English to English officials. All Orientals are fond of talking, and, as a matter of courtesy and custom, use long-winded phrases and are slow in coming to the point. The day's work is quicker done if conducted in English; and this condition is better fulfilled if a native official has no opportunity of expressing his own views in his own language.

Moreover, the Latin saying, *Crescit indulgens sibi dirus hydrops*, seems to me applicable to almost all moral as well as physical diseases; and especially to that mental malady, the inordinate love of power. To this malady his Lordship seems to me a victim. The force of circumstances, as I have already said, far more than his own volition, has placed him in a position of exceptional authority; and his personal characteristics have led him to make the consolidation and extension of that authority the dominant principle of his policy. The extent to which this policy is now carried on, and has been carried on for years, can hardly be appreciated by any one not intimately acquainted with Egypt. It is no exaggeration to assert that under this policy the administration of Egypt is conducted by British officials, and that these officials are under the absolute control of the British Agency. From the highest posts in the public service to the lowest, every appointment is made under the supervision of Lord Cromer, and his disapproval is fatal. This is not all; I have no doubt his Lordship would, in good faith, deny the statement that no British official can express doubt

as to the expediency of any measure emanating from the Agency, or criticise it unfavourably, without losing all chance of promotion and risking the tenure of his position. All old public servants, whether British or native, who have resided long in the country and who have thus acquired experience, are viewed with a certain disfavour from the fact that they are competent to express opinions which may not be in accord with the ideas in favour at headquarters. What his Lordship prefers are young officials utterly unacquainted with the country, and who, therefore, even if they had the wish, have not the power to question the wisdom of his opinions. Very shortly before his leaving Egypt for South Africa, Lord Kitchener, while still Governor of the Soudan, came down to Cairo on a visit, and on being asked by an acquaintance what he had come for, replied, as the story goes : "I have come to take a course of lessons in Lord Cromer's Kindergarten." I cannot vouch myself for the truth of this story, but I can vouch for it as representing the current opinion of the day. Under the existing *régime*, the policy of the Agency has always been to discourage any intimacy

between our officials and their native colleagues, and to give as little encouragement as possible to any British official who endeavours to ascertain for himself the views and opinions of the Egyptian population. No doubt, for his own convenience, and for the purpose of carrying out his duties, a British official may pick up sufficient Arabic to understand and speak it colloquially. But any attempt to study Arabic literature and hold converse with the teachers of Islam would not be a mark in his favour with the powers that be. The inevitable result of this state of things is that the Agency for many years past has only been visited by persons who shared, or professed to share, Lord Cromer's views as to the expediency of administering Egypt by British officials, and that the few persons, whether British, foreign, or native, who were competent to form an independent opinion differing from that of our Consul-General, have gradually ceased to have any relations with the Agency other than those of a personal or social character.

I do not wish to insinuate for one moment that Lord Cromer's isolation is due to any deliberate plan or set purpose of his own. On the contrary, I have no doubt he is honestly

convinced that every one of the steps through which he has augmented his supremacy, by removing any obstacles standing in his way, has been taken in the interest of England, in the first place, and of Egypt in the second. The results, however, of his policy, whether adopted consciously or unconsciously, wittingly or unwittingly, have been equally injurious. No small share of the responsibility attached to the policy which Lord Cromer has pursued must justly be assigned to successive British Governments. Both parties, Conservative and Liberal, have been equally guilty in refusing to look facts in the face. They have both adhered to the fiction that our military occupation of Egypt was only temporary and was to be brought to a close whenever Egypt should be rendered competent to govern herself. As the years passed on, the date at which this contingency could even be expected to occur was postponed further and further. But up to to-day, no British Government has had the courage to speak the truth and to say that it is our intention to prolong our occupation to the Greek Calends. This feebleness of purpose has imposed upon our representatives in Egypt the necessity of keeping up



the hollow pretence that Egypt is still an independent State, whose lawful sovereign is H. H. the Khedive. I may be doing Lord Cromer an injustice, but, as far as I am aware, he has steadily discountenanced the idea of an avowed and open Protectorate. I know that many years ago he, in conversation with a friend of mine from whom I heard the story and who was in favour of a Protectorate, answered: "There is no need for any formal declaration, we have got to go on as we are doing now, and some fine day the world will discover that we have established a Protectorate without anybody knowing that we have done so." I hold myself that a Protectorate has got to come and perhaps at no very distant period. My contention is that when the time arises we shall experience far greater difficulties in carrying out our intention than we should have done at an earlier period.

I am not alluding so much to difficulties which might arise from the jealousy or the ill will of other European Powers. Now that France has engaged to give us a free hand in Egypt, and so long as the *entente cordiale* remains in force, any proposal on our part to

assume direct responsibility for the government of Egypt, and to guarantee the payment of the interest of the Egyptian public debt, would probably encounter no serious objection on the part of any Continental Power with the possible exception of Turkey. The opposition I anticipate would come from Egypt.

Up to a few years ago, Egypt would perhaps have acquiesced in a British Protectorate as readily as she always has acquiesced in her endless list of conquerors and in her equally numerous changes of dynasties. Nor can there be any question that, so long as we are given a free hand in dealing with any overt resistance, our present force in Egypt would prove sufficient to enable us to establish a Protectorate if we were so minded. The difficulty would be that of passive resistance on the part of the Egyptian public. A number of causes have contributed to bring about this development of popular sentiment. Let me enumerate only a few of the principal ones. Under British rule we have introduced freedom of the Press and applied it to the native papers, printed for the most part in Arabic, and we have done this in accordance with the traditions of political life in our own

country. His Lordship has always maintained that the best way to suppress popular agitation is to allow the agitation to blow off steam by means of a free Press. I think this argument holds good when the rulers are of the same race and use the same language as the ruled, and when the great majority of the population can both read and write. Neither of those conditions exists in Egypt. From the days of Mahomet Ali to those of Ismail, to speak evil of the ruler was a very grave offence, punished with death or mutilation. It was the duty of the native ministers to call the attention of the Sovereign to any charge against the Government which appeared in such few papers as then existed. Now, there are a score of native papers, some of which, such as *El Lewa* have a very considerable circulation, and are forwarded daily by rail to all parts of the Delta and the Nile Valley. In almost every village, however small, there is somebody who can read or write, and when the day's work is over this man of letters reads the newspaper out to his fellow villagers. The reader being relatively a man of education is able to expound the Koran and is therefore likely to be biassed against infidels. He therefore

naturally selects for reading such passages as attribute grave offences against morality and justice, however unjustly, to British officers and officials. The truth of anything which appears in print is taken for granted by the fellaheen, and especially if the charge made is one that appeals to their instinctive dislike and distrust of foreign rulers. I am assured by English merchants and traders, whose occupation causes them to visit the villages, especially in the Delta, that they have noticed the great effect produced by the native papers, and, with or without reason, they attribute to this cause a marked change in the manner of their native customers and acquaintances. According to them, this change does not go so far as hostile utterance, but seems to indicate that the old confidence in our good faith and honest dealing has been impaired from some cause or other. Of course this assertion will be denied by almost every British official, from Lord Cromer downwards, who still clings to the delusion that, whatever may be said in the native papers, the fellaheen are too keenly alive to the vast improvement we have brought about in their material condition to have the slightest wish that our

military occupation should be brought to a close.

Another cause of discontent is due to the vague idea that some change is impending. So late as in 1904 Lord Cromer, in his annual report, expressed a conviction that the recovery of her autonomy by Egypt was a mere question of time, and these words were doubtless repeated in all the native papers, and not unreasonably led an ignorant and illiterate people to think there must be some hidden reason for such a statement being made by the great British Lord, who is supposed to speak in the name of England, the real ruler of Egypt. On the face of the globe there is not a country more prone to desert the losing side than Egypt; and if the natives should get a notion into their heads that England was contemplating the withdrawal, or even the diminution, of her army in Egypt, they would begin to speculate as to whether they had better incline towards the Court or towards the Nationalist Party, represented by Mustapha Pasha Kamel. I confess I find it hard to take the new Arabi seriously. He seems to me an educated Achmed the Egyptian, with the difference that he is an



Effendi and not a fellah, and that he is a type of the Frenchified Egyptians who surrounded Ismail in the days of his prosperity, who knew no literature and spoke no language other than that of France, and whose highest pride was to be taken for a born son of Gaul. I have lived too much in Egypt not to be aware that in this world-old country the smallest causes may produce the most unexpected results. Still, as far as I can judge, the issue of a new Anglo-French edition by the Editor of the *Lewa*, the organ of the Egyptian Nationalists, is not likely to produce much effect in Egypt; even if, as *The Times* alleges, the Khedive himself had supplied the capital necessary for its publication. I attach far more importance to the facts that the fellaheen, that is, the vast majority of the Egyptian population, have acquired what to them is comparative wealth, that with this wealth they have developed certain habits of expenditure; and that, amidst these habits, one of the most common is the desire to obtain a higher education for their sons. In the days when I was young I was always told that knowledge was power. My later experience has shown me that the knowledge of reading,

writing, and arithmetic, though a most valuable acquisition when it is confined to a few, is absolutely worthless when it is well-nigh universal. What the fellaheen desire for their children is not mental improvement, but such elementary education as may qualify them for entering the public service as clerks or accountants, and thus rising in the social scale. I am afraid the practical result of this craving for posts and places may convert a large number of efficient labourers into very inefficient public servants. Still, the mere circumstance of this craving for education, the influence of the native Press, and the encouragement given by the Government to the public schools, have materially contributed to the sentiment of unrest to which I have already alluded. The possibility of a free native Press, and the spread of education leading to unrest, should, I think, have been foreseen by the British Agency.

I entertain no doubt that Lord Cromer and his British subordinates were honestly convinced that if they secured the material prosperity of Egypt they might rely on the self-interest, if not on the gratitude, of the Egyptians, to render them staunch supporters of the British occupation,

under which their prosperity had been achieved and under which alone it can be maintained. Their mistake lay in ignoring the tenacity with which all followers of the Prophet cling to their creed. Islam is so intimately associated with all the habits, manners, customs and usages of everyday life in Mahomedan countries that it is very difficult to make any changes in existing laws and customs without raising a suspicion amidst the native population that these changes are dictated by hostility to Islam. The country has been inundated with British officials, who, even when they are nominally subject to the authority of their native co-adjutors appointed by the Khedivial Government, are given to understand that their native colleagues are to carry out the instructions they receive from the British Agency. Thus the native officials, learning that they were mere dummies in the administration of their own country, have either retired from the public service or have contented themselves with drawing their salaries and acquiescing in whatever instructions they may receive from their British colleagues.

The situation is aggravated by the personal

characteristics of its authors. From causes I have already alluded to, his Lordship prefers to do as much as possible by himself, dislikes criticism, and prefers to act through officials who, whether native or European, are content to carry out his instructions even though privately they may dissent from his views. One by one, every influence which impaired his autocracy has been removed or fettered. The Khedive has been taught that it is more consonant with his comfort and self-respect not to tender advice about the internal affairs of his kingdom. The native ministers in common with all Orientals dislike trouble, and, having found out that their position is much pleasanter if they accept the proposals of their British advisers without discussing their merits or demerits, avoid any futile discussion. The British officials, with few and decreasing exceptions, are ready to carry out the policy dictated from the British Agency without raising objections or suggesting difficulties which might delay its prompt execution. The only institution which tends to limit his autocracy are the capitulations, the mixed tribunals, the mercantile community, and the Consuls-General accredited to the Khedivial Court, whose authority has

already been seriously diminished under the Anglo-French agreement.

In his report of the year 1905, published last April, Lord Cromer has put forward with great frankness and ability the reforms which he would desire to introduce in the near future. The following—to quote his Lordship's own words—is “A brief summary of the proposals” which are set forth in his report.

1. No change is proposed in the composition or function of the existing Legislative Councils or Assembly.

2. A separate Council is to be created, composed wholly of subjects or protected subjects of the Powers which were parties to the institution of the mixed tribunals. Decrees passed by a majority of this Council, and promulgated by the Egyptian Government, with the consent of His Britannic Majesty's Government, would be binding on all foreigners resident in Egypt.

3. An engagement will be taken by both the British and Egyptian Governments that every reservation in favour of British subjects should endure for the benefit of the subjects of other Powers.

4. It is proposed that the Council should



consist of about twenty-five to thirty ministers. Of these a minority proportion would be named by the Egyptian Government. A limit to the number of officials in the service of the Egyptian Government who may be named members of the Council is to be fixed. The majority of the Council is to be elected in such a manner as shall be hereafter decided.

5. Local interests, and not nationality, shall form the basis of representation, but the maximum number of elected members, who may be of any single nationality, is to be fixed by treaty.

6. The Suez Canal Convention and the Khedivial Decree of the 28th November 1904 are to be excluded from the purview of the Council.

7. The Egyptian Government will be precluded from derogating from provisions as to freedom of trade or as to the rates at which customs duties are levied in virtue of any existing or future commercial concessions with any foreign Government.

8. Quarantine regulations connected with safeguarding foreign countries from the introduction of disease by ships passing through the canal will continue as at present to form the subject of diplomatic arrangements. The preservation of

Egypt against the introduction of disease from abroad will be within the functions of the Egyptian Government and Legislatures.

9. The existing Consular Courts are to be abolished when other Courts have been erected by fresh Legislation.

10. Certain reservations are to be made as regards the freedom of action of the new Legislature in the matter of criminal legislation.

11. The system of quinquennial periods for the Mixed Tribunals is to be abolished. The existing *régime* of those Tribunals is to remain in force until modified by fresh legislation passed by the Council and approved by the British and Egyptian Governments.

12. The existing judges of the Mixed Tribunals are to be entitled to retain their posts, and their services are to be available in any Courts which may in the future be established.

13. The British and Egyptian Governments are to make a formal declaration to the effect that they have no intention of changing the fundamental principles of the existing civil and criminal legislation.

14. The principle of the irremovability of judges is to be maintained.

15. The official languages of the new Council will be English, French and Italian, but written opinions may be recorded in any other language.

16. English, French, and Italian are to be legally placed on a footing of perfect equality.

17. The Hague Arbitration Tribunal is to decide any differences of opinion as regards the interpretation of the treaty which it will be necessary for the Powers to sign.

The programme thus summarised is a very able and lucid document. I have no reason to suppose that Lord Cromer has changed his views since it was issued last April. On the contrary, I have every reason to believe that his Lordship has been actively engaged since its issue in recommending its adoption to all the parties who might be likely to raise objection to its acceptance. The Legislative Councils are to discharge their nominal duties and yet to retain their present rank and draw their present salaries. The foreign residents, a very powerful body, are to be conciliated by the suggestion that a separate Council should be formed exclusively from their ranks, partly nominated and partly elected, whose qualification is to be local interest and not nationality, and whose decrees

are, subject to the approval of the Egyptian Government, to be binding on all foreigners resident in Egypt. Foreign countries which have commercial interests in Egypt are assured that, under the proposed reforms, their subjects shall be placed on exactly the same footing as British subjects. The Suez Canal Company and the Anglo-French Agreement are expressly excluded from any criticism or interference on the part of the new Legislature, and the Egyptian Government is precluded from adopting any recommendation of the Council affecting custom duties or absolute freedom of trade. The Powers who are asked to abolish the capitulations are assured the abolition will not take place till other Courts shall have been established with their approval. The Mixed Tribunals are not to be renewed when their next quinquennial jurisdiction expires, but the judges, who would naturally resent losing their appointments, are informed that the existing judges will be allowed to retain their posts and their salaries during their lifetime, and their irremovability is to be guaranteed. As a sop to British susceptibilities, English, French, and Italian are to be henceforth the three official languages used in the

Courts which are to supersede the existing Mixed Tribunals; but to satisfy the irritation this provision might cause to suitors of other nationalities, written pleadings may be recorded in any other language, I presume, including even Arabic. Finally, in order to commend the new Egyptian constitution to public opinion on the Continent and in America, any controversy as to the proper interpretation of the meaning of the proposed agreement, which must be signed by the Powers who were parties to the institution of the Mixed Courts, has to be submitted to the arbitration of the Hague International Tribunal.

I fully admit that no better or abler plan could be devised with the object of reconciling all the various conflicting interests which militate against the new constitution Lord Cromer is desirous of introducing into Egypt. I fully agree that the abolition of the capitulations would be, in itself, a great boon to the Egyptian Revenue.

There are many objections I should raise as to the particular proposals of this draft constitution for Egypt. But as I object to the scheme *in toto*, to discuss details is a sheer waste of time.



To speak plain English, the way to understand the project in question is to strike out the name of Egyptian Government wherever it appears, and to substitute for it that of the British Agency. The capitulations, the Mixed Tribunals, the Consuls-General accredited to the Khedive, and last but not least the European companies and capitalists, are the only influences left in Egypt which interfere with the absolute autocracy Lord Cromer's policy would confer, not only upon himself, but upon his successors in the post he now occupies as the representative of our unavowed Protectorate. I find it difficult to comprehend how autonomy is compatible with absolute personal autocracy. I learn from Lord Cromer's two last reports that the aim of his policy is to prepare Egypt for autonomy. I do not doubt for one moment the sincerity of this avowal. My intelligence, however, is too limited to enable me to understand how the absolute autocracy of the ruler can be the way to prepare the ruled for autonomy. The process seems to me analogous to that of the schoolmaster who undertook to teach his pupils the art of swimming, but would never allow them to go into the water till they had learnt to swim.

The only explanation I can offer is that Lord Milner was in the right when he described Egypt as "the land of paradox."

If it could be proved to me that the continuance of a system under which Egypt is to be subject to the absolute will of a single individual is essential to the maintenance of our Protectorate, there is no more to be said as far as I am concerned. I have never wavered in the views I have expressed for years that the command of our highway to India is essential to the welfare of the British Empire, and that this being so, England is justified in occupying Egypt till such time as our Protectorate ceases to be essential to the vital interest of England. As far as the present is concerned, I can see no reasonable prospect of Egypt becoming an independent, self-governed State. If, from any cause, our occupation was to be brought to a close, some other Power would step into our shoes. Egypt is too wealthy and too open to attack to stand alone, and if she must be placed under foreign protection, I think her interests would be far better protected by England than by any other Great Power. To my mind, the idea of autonomy being conferred on Egypt is, for the present, a

pious aspiration and nothing more. It would be folly for any man who has seen so many changes in the world as I have witnessed in the course of a longish life, to say positively that Egypt may never become capable of self-government. It is futile in discussing mundane affairs to look very far ahead. A score or so of years is as much as our mental outlook can cover, and I decline to express any opinion as to whether Egypt will ever be governed by her own inhabitants, or, if so, at what date her emancipation from absolute autocratic rule, such as she has endured for countless centuries and endures to-day, may be approximately expected to occur. Under these circumstances, to talk of Egyptian autonomy as coming within the range of practical politics seems to me an absurdity. As things stand, there are various limitations which still furnish certain guarantees against the autocratic power possessed by our representative being carried to any great extent. At the risk of repeating myself, I gladly own that Lord Cromer is as good an absolute ruler as Egypt has ever possessed; and if he should carry out his programme to abolish the capitulations, suppress the mixed courts, establish an advisory

legislature nominated indirectly, if not directly, by himself, deprive the Khedive of the right of communicating with foreign Powers except through the British Agency, and thereby convert the Consuls-General accredited to his Highness into commercial consuls, the machine of autocracy would work without a hitch or break. I doubt, however, autocracy, absolute and uncontrolled, proving beneficial even to so high-minded and upright an autocrat as our present Consul-General. I remember two or three years ago when I was calling at the Agency I happened to speak to him on the subject of the Caisse de la Dette, and he remarked: "I have often thought when I was in India that if we had had there such an institution as the Caisse de la Dette to check our Indian expenditure, we might have been saved from many extravagances and errors we have committed there." Apparently, since then, his Lordship has altered his mind and has come to the conclusion that the disadvantages of any independent institution whatever exceed its advantages—for Egypt. I am myself of opinion that, in the interest of Egypt, the gain she might derive from the abolition of the capitu-

lations would be dearly purchased by the removal of the international institutions which, to some extent, hamper the absolute autocracy Lord Cromer now desires for himself, and which must, of necessity, devolve upon his successors, who may easily be men of far less common sense and sound judgment.

I feel strongly the duty we contracted towards Egypt when we occupied the country and undertook its administration. It may satisfy English sentiment to maintain the fiction that we came here and remain here for the good of Egypt. A fiction, however, which imposes upon nobody is, to my thinking, at once foolish and dishonest. All the same, I hold we owe it to ourselves, as far as is consistent with the maintenance of our occupation, to render that supremacy as little onerous to Egypt as possible. For the time, at any rate, the belief professed at the British Agency and propagated by British officialdom—that the natives are so grateful for the material improvement we have effected in their condition as to regard the possibility of our retiring from Egypt with absolute dismay—has been discredited by the course of events. Still I see symptoms of its revival, and I notice that



it is the cue, if I may use the word, of British officialdom to say that there is not and never has been any unrest in Egypt, and that the natives, though their affection for us may not be ardent, know their own interests a great deal too well to desire our departure. If people like to believe that everything is for the best in the best possible of worlds I should be sorry to shake their optimism. All I can assert is that, in this country, religion plays a part it does not play in Europe, and that therefore fanaticism is always a latent element which wise statesmanship should never fail to take into account. As things are, I see no cause to anticipate any outburst of hostility between the followers of the Cross and the Crescent, especially in Egypt, where the native population is, as a rule, of a pacific character; and it is manifest that under such a contingency the odds would be in favour of the British troops as against any possible assailants. Still, if it was my lot to live in or near a powder magazine I should strongly object to anyone throwing matches carelessly about. On like grounds I should always deprecate in Egypt, and still more in the Soudan, any needless cause of dissatisfaction being given to a population with whom any

grievance, however unreasonable, is well nigh certain to excite suspicion that the grievance is intended to give offence to the creed of Islam.

My contention is that, putting aside our improvements in irrigation, whose utility the fellahen can appreciate, the reforms we endeavour to introduce, and our interference with native customs, usages, laws, and habits, give umbrage to the inhabitants of Egypt, and are also calculated to create an impression that they are directed against the authority of the Koran. If these reforms were carried out by native administrators speaking their own language, belonging to their own creed, and understanding their own prejudices, they would, I feel convinced, create far less discontent than they do at present. All change is distasteful to a conservative nation warmly attached to a non-progressive creed : and the unpopularity is all the stronger when the reforms are introduced by British officials often very imperfectly acquainted with their language, and so convinced of the superiority of British ideas as to deem their advantages too self-evident to require explanation. I cannot but think that by this time—whatever may be the case with the British Agency—the great

majority of our British officials must have come to the conclusion that any attempts to persuade the natives to accept British ideas respecting sanitation, law, justice, and administration are doomed to failure. This being so, the question is whether it is worth while to continue an experiment which has been proved impracticable.

If I am asked what I should propose as an alternative, I should recommend the system which has been adopted in the native States of India by England, in Tunis and Algeria by France, and in Bosnia and the Herzegovina by Austria, and adopted with success. The fundamental principles of this system may be stated briefly as follows. Supreme authority should be vested in the hands of the representative of the Protecting Power, whether he may be called Resident, Governor, or Consul-General. Subject to this supreme authority, as little change as possible should be made in the internal administration of the protected State. The old laws, customs and usages should remain as they were before the Protectorate existed, and the old native administrators should as a rule be retained in the public service. These administrators should be clearly given to understand that they

would be allowed a considerable latitude in the discharge of their functions, and that they would not be called to account if their administration should be considered somewhat differently from the view entertained by the Protecting Power, but that if any gross scandal or abuse should occur during their administration they would be forthwith dismissed or, if necessary, severely punished by the representative of the Protectorate. To work out the details of such a system must be the work of the Resident, and this can only be done by the men on the spot. All I am concerned with is its broad principle.

In the provinces, all appointments up to the rank of Governor should be held by Egyptian subjects, who would be responsible for order and decent administration and would be liable to dismissal by the Consul-General in case any gross outrage or corruption were brought to the latter's knowledge. This, as I have already stated, is, in substance, the scheme suggested by Lord Dufferin, and it is the one best fitted to render our Protectorate more congenial—or perhaps I should say less uncongenial—to the Egyptian public than that which has hitherto been adopted by the British Agency.

At the moment when I write two contingencies seem not unlikely to occur, either of which might bring about a crisis in Egyptian affairs. The first contingency is the possibility that the Great Powers may assent to Lord Cromer's demands for having a free hand in Egypt accorded to England not only by France but by the other Great Powers in Europe. The second, and, to my mind, the far more probable contingency, is that the Powers may decline to accede to the demands I have recapitulated until the relations between England, as the Protecting Power, and Egypt, as the Protected State, have been discussed by an International Conference. In view of either of these contingencies, it is all important to call the attention of England to the unsatisfactory character of our present unavowed Protectorate and to the failure of our existing policy of ruling Egypt by British officials in preference to administering Egyptian affairs with the cordial co-operation of the native element. This must be my excuse for the publication of *The Egypt of the Future*.

FINIS.

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